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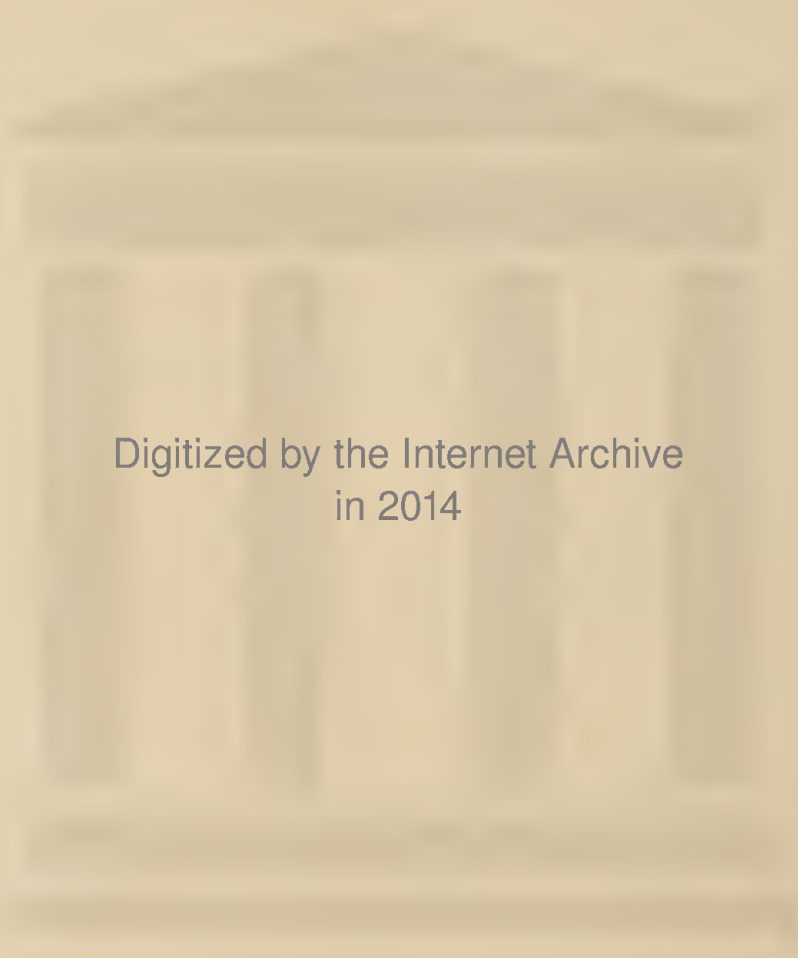

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

WILLIAM WARBURTON, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

A NEW EDITION,

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A DISCOURSE BY WAY OF GENERAL PREFACE;

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, WRITINGS, AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR;

BY RICHARD HURD, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

VOLUME THE TENTH.

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Luke xiii. 1. 2, *&c.*

There were present, at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

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AND

DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AND

OCCASIONS.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LADY MANSFIELD.

MADAM,

YOU ought not to think strange of an address of this kind from a *Churchman*, to the Grand-daughter of that great Magistrate, who, while he held the Seals for the King and Constitution, besides the most exemplary attention to the proper business of his Office, was elegantly ambitious to give the last polish to his Country, by a patronage of Learning and Science. Into this equal passion, he resolved all his private satisfactions. He took early into his notice, and continued long in his protection, every great Name in Letters and Religion, from CUDWORTH, who died in the reign of Charles the Second, to PRIDEAUX, who lived under George the First. It was the care and culture of an Age: and in spite of a dissolute, abandoned Court, he made the reign of Charles the Second to be, what it is now likely to be always esteemed, OUR GOLDEN AGE OF LITERATURE.

The

The glory of bearing this relation to so *faithful a Guardian of the human Faculties in their non-age*, Providence, in reward of your virtues, hath doubled, in a still nearer relation to One, who, in his high Station, may with the same justice be esteemed the great support of Civil Liberty; and is now engaged in the like generous task for the very BEING of a free Community, which the other so successfully accomplished for that chief Ornament of it, LITERATURE and SCIENCE.

But the honours you derive from others, you preserve untarnished, by the splendor of those you have acquired for yourself, in the course of a sober and enlightened Piety; which makes you an example to the best of your Sex, as the patriotic Virtues of your illustrious Consort will make him, to the wisest of his.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP'S

Most obliged and faithful Servant,

W. GLOUCESTER.

Dec. 24, 1766.

SERMON XVIII.

Preached at Lincoln's-Inn Chapel, on the first public Fast-day after the Calamity of Lisbon, 1755.

NATURAL AND CIVIL EVENTS THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

LUKE xiii. 1, 2, &c.

THERE WERE PRESENT, AT THAT SEASON, SOME THAT TOLD HIM OF THE GALILEANS, WHOSE BLOOD PILATE HAD MINGLED WITH THEIR SACRIFICES.

AND JESUS ANSWERING, SAID UNTO THEM, SUPPOSE YE THAT THESE GALILEANS WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL THE GALILEANS, BECAUSE THEY SUFFERED SUCH THINGS?

I TELL YOU, NAY: BUT, EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

OR THOSE EIGHTEEN UPON WHOM THE TOWER OF SILOAM FELL, AND SLEW THEM, THINK YE THAT THEY WERE SINNERS ABOVE ALL MEN THAT DWELT IN JERUSALEM?

I TELL YOU, NAY: BUT, EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.

THIS solemn reproof hath been commonly understood, and often quoted, as a condemnation of the opinion which ascribes "the general

calamities effected by natural or civil causes, to God's displeasure against sin;" but surely with little reason; for that opinion is founded in the very essence of Religion. What the text condemns is the superstitious abuse of it, which uncharitably concludes, that "the sufferers in a general calamity are greater sinners than other men."

That this was the case, I shall endeavour to shew —from the character of the speaker—from the state and circumstances of the hearers—and from the very words of the text itself.

1. He who goeth about to instruct others in the knowledge of God, whether commissioned from Heaven or prompted by his own Charity, must needs conceive that the moral Governor of the universe, whose essential character it is, not to *leave himself without a witness*, doth frequently employ the physical and civil operations of our system, to support and reform the moral. For such a Governor will manifest his dominion in whatever world he is pleased to station and exercise his accountable and probationary creatures. In man's state and condition here, natural and civil events are the proper instruments of moral government. The teacher therefore of Religion, or of a moral Governor, will be naturally led to inculcate this truth, that general calamities, though events merely physical or civil, were (amongst other ends) ordained by the Author of all nature to serve for the scourge of moral disorders. For to suppose, that physical or civil events, whether friendly or adverse, such as peace or war, fertility or dearth, health

or

or pestilence, are the proper instruments of reward and punishment, and yet, that God doth not so employ them, but will rather have recourse to what we call miraculous operations, is an unwarranted and indeed disrespectful notion of divine Wisdom; as implying a kind of incapacity in the Almighty to fit the natural to the moral system in such a manner as to make the former a ready instrument for the regulation of the latter.

2. If, from the character of the speaker, we turn to the state and condition of the hearers, we shall see further reason to acquiesce in this conclusion. The Jews, of all people upon earth, were best justified in ascribing national calamities to the anger of offended Heaven. They were of a Race long accustomed to receive rewards and punishments through the instrumentality of Nature; and of a Religion which more solemnly and exactly dispensed them; for the most part indeed, they were miraculously enforced; yet frequently too, administered in the common order and course of Nature: so that such a people, whose sacred books bore testimony in every page to the punishment of crimes by pestilence, by famine, and the sword, could never hesitate a moment to conclude, that the calamities of the wicked Galileans were a mark of God's displeasure against sin.

3. Lastly, the very words of the reproof [—*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*], evidently imply, that amongst the many ends effected in the administration of Nature, this was one, to express God's displeasure at human iniquities, in order to bring men to REPENTANCE—*except ye* REPENT, *ye shall*

all likewise perish: that is, *perish* for the same cause (your sins), and by the same instrument (the Roman power). In which it appears, that our blessed Lord alluded to his own prediction, of the exterminating vengeance impending over the whole Nation by the arms of Vespasian.

But now, if the belief of a moral end, in these general calamities, be a principle of Religion, proper to be inculcated, to support the reverence due to the moral Governor of the world; What was it, you will ask, that could deserve so solemn and so severe a reproof as our Lord's words are confessed to convey, on this occasion?

The answer is easy. It was that detestable superstition, which so often accompanies, and so fatally infects, this generous principle of Religion; the superstition of ascribing public calamities, not to God's displeasure against sin in general, but to his vengeance on the persons of the unhappy sufferers; who, for some fancy or other, this Superstition concludes to be greater sinners than other men.

This deserved all the severity of our Lord's censure, as it implied gross ignorance in the nature of the punishment; and betrayed a malignity of heart which defeated the very end of the dispensation.

1. When Sodom and Gomorra were destroyed by a fire from Heaven, and the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan extirpated by the command of God, who furnished the instruments, which he employed, with extraordinary powers for their destruction, the people of God were authorized to conclude,

clude, that those nations were sinners above all other men; and, consequently, that their punishment was inflicted for their own immeasurable iniquities, as well as for a warning and example to the rest of mankind. But when God, by the admirable direction of his general providence, so adjusts the circumstances of the natural and moral systems, as to make the events in the former to serve for the regulation of the latter, we must, in all reason, conceive that such events are principally designed as alarms and warnings to a careless inattentive world; and that their moral purpose was rather general example than particular vengeance: for the attaining of which end, it is sufficient for us to believe, that those who suffer are sinners deserving punishment; not that they are greater sinners than those who have escaped; possibly much less, as the preservation of these was necessary for the carrying on some other great and inscrutable design of Providence, in the more general government of the moral world.

From all this, it appears, that though, indeed, we be allowed, on the soberest principles of reason, to consider such unhappy sufferers as the criminal object of an offended Master; yet are we by no means authorized on any principles, either of reason or religion, to conclude that they are more criminal than others.

2. This leads me to another reason of the severity of our Lord's reproof; the extreme uncharitableness of this wicked superstition: For when once we begin to estimate the degree of demerit by the frequency

or severity of the punishment, and the degree of God's disfavour in proportion to the demerit, these our distressed brethren will be no longer the object of our pity, but of our scorn and aversion, as the abandoned and the outcasts of Heaven. And when superstition is once got into this train, so frequent and general are the calamities of human life, that Christian communities, from a brotherhood of love, would soon degenerate into a desperate crew of miscreants, each rejoicing in the pains, and triumphing in the miseries, of others.

3. A third reason of the severity of the reproof is, That this superstition has a direct tendency to defeat the very end of the chastisement. It is inflicted to rouse, to wake, and to alarm a drowsy, inattentive world; to beget, in those who have escaped, humility and circumspection; which, by a timely repentance, may avert the vengeance hovering round them. But when men, by this wretched error, are become so debauched as to fancy, that the unhappy, on whom the evil falls, are *sinners above all others*, they no longer consider the punishment as a warning of some approaching mischief, but as a passed vengeance, in which themselves are but remotely concerned, and have therefore no need to scrutinize their own conduct, or disturb their quiet with self-apprehensions. Thus the gracious purpose of Heaven being defeated, and the hand of Mercy stretched out in vain, an exterminating vengeance follows, and the dreadful scene closes in a final destruction.

This was the case of these very men to whom the

reproof of Jesus was addressed. They were far gone in the superstition here condemned. They had long considered general disasters in this absurd and impious light; and the suffering Galileans supported them in the satisfaction they took in their own ways. Exemplary warnings became lost upon them; and every fresh gleam of divine mercy only served to ripen them into the speedy objects of his justice.

Things were now at a crisis; and the last *warning-voice from Heaven* was given in the case of the Galileans, suffering by that very scourge, the Roman power, which stood ready at the door to drive and sweep away their very name and nation. And now the gracious Saviour of the world exerts this last effort of his goodness towards them, in an explanation of the nature of these punishments: He shews that their principal purpose was for their admonition and amendment, to awake them to repentance, and an abhorrence of their ways; which if neglected or delayed, *they too should perish*, and in a more general desolation.

But the *day of grace* was past: they were deaf to Reason, to Nature, and to Religion. Their doom was now pronounced; and that instrument of God's vengeance, the Imperial *eagle*, scenting the *carcass** from afar, came down with an exterminating wing on this devoted Nation, already more than half destroyed by its intestine vices and corruptions.

The contemplation of this awful judgment is at this time so peculiarly useful to Us, that I almost scruple to call you away from an attention to it,

* Matt. xxiv. 28.

though it be to set before you a view of the wonders of Divine Providence, which this PRINCIPLE presents and opens to us.

For what I proposed, after explaining my text, was to shew, that the doctrine of it, which ascribes THE GENERAL CALAMITIES, ARISING FROM NATURAL CAUSES, TO GOD'S DISPLEASURE AGAINST SIN, displays his glory in the fairest colours, and establishes man's peace and happiness on the most solid foundations.

And, secondly, that the present fashionable opinion, THAT NATURAL EVENTS PROCEED NOT FROM A MORAL RULER, AND HAVE NO RELATION TO MORAL GOVERNMENT, is the source of perpetual disquiets and alarms to the abandoned and forlorn inhabitants of the earth.

1. First then, we may observe, that the application of natural events to moral government, in the common course of Providence (a disposition of things to be distinguished from that whereby God, in the constitution of universal nature, hath annexed happiness to virtue—and to vice, distress and misery) connects the character of Lord and Governor of the intellectual world, with that of Creator and Preserver of the material: A consideration of great use, as for other religious purposes respecting God's glory, so particularly for this, that it redresses the old Manichean impiety, so derogatory to it, which makes an evil Principle a sharer with him in the direction of the Universe: For the constant undisturbed course of the natural system, when compared with the disorders of the

the moral, first gave birth to that monstrous imagination. Now this doctrine, of the PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY, the direction of natural events to moral government obviates all irreligious suspicions; and not only satisfies us that there is but one Governor of both systems, but that both systems are conducted by one scheme of Providence.

To form the constitution of Nature in such a manner that, without controlling or suspending its laws, it should continue through a long succession of ages to produce its physical revolutions, as they best contribute to the preservation and order of its own system, just at those precise periods of time when their effects, whether salutary or hurtful to man, may serve as instruments for the government of the moral world; *e. g.* that a foreign enemy, amidst our intestine broils, should desolate all the flourishing works of rural industry; that warring elements, in the stated order of natural government, should depopulate and tear in pieces a high-viced city, just in those very moments when moral government required a warning and example to be held out to a careless world, is giving us the noblest as well as most astonishing idea of God's GOODNESS and JUSTICE.

Had the government of the moral system generally required the control and alteration of natural laws in that sensible effect which we call a *miracle* *, it

* We can see but two necessary occasions of this extraordinary dispensation;—the one, to attest and support the truth of a *new Religion* coming from God; the other, to administer a *Theocratic government*. These are occasions worthy the divine Wisdom, and necessary in the nature of things.

might

might have argued defect of wisdom. Had the government of the natural system required the operation of such laws as would be always disturbing and defeating the sanctions of the moral, it might have argued defect of power. But where the stated laws of Physics, while they are promoting their own purpose, are, at the same time, so contrived as to support, invigorate, and enforce the sanctions of Religion, this, I say, must needs give us the noblest, as well as most astonishing idea, of God's WISDOM and POWER.

Nor do the glories of this Dispensation afford less consolation and comfort of security to the truly pious man. For when it is understood, that the course of nature was, by the laws imposed upon it from the foundations of the world, so contrived as to co-operate with the laws of moral government, such an one, on the appearance of any of these public warnings to awake the nations from their lethargy of vice, will never be terrified and distracted with the vain apprehensions of an undistinguishing desolation, which is out of his power to avoid; as being well assured, from the nature of the judgment, that a sincere purpose of amending the public manners will be able to avert the approaching vengeance.

Nor let men so rationally instructed in the ways of God suffer their well-placed confidence to be shaken by this plausible sophistry, "That it is utterly unphilosophical to suppose that a present and instantaneous change in our conduct can stop or avert a natural event, established by a strong connected series of causes, which have kept operating ever since the foundations of the world." We can tell

tell these pretending reasoners that our religious confidence is not derived from so absurd a principle, a principle erected on the narrow and unfaithful ground of superstition. Our conclusions are drawn from the most reasonable conceptions that man can entertain of his Creator and Lord: Who, when he made the world (in which all time was as an instant before him), the free determinations of the human Will, and the necessary effects of Laws physical, were so fitted and accommodated to one another, that a sincere repentance in the *moral* world should be sure to avert an impending desolation in the *natural*; not by any present alteration or suspension of its established Laws, but by originally adjusting all their operations to all the foreseen circumstances of moral agency: So as to make Matter and Motion (besides their other purposes) to serve for the regulation of the Understanding and Will. We should blush, let me tell them, to be thought so uninstructed in the nature of Prayer as to fancy it can work any temporary change in the dispositions of the Deity, who is the *same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:* Yet we are not ashamed to maintain, that God, in the chain of causes and effects, which not only sustains each system, but connects them all with one another, hath so wonderfully contrived, that the temporary endeavours of pious men shall procure good and avert evil, by means of that PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY which he hath willed to exist between moral actions and natural events.

Thus we see, these two essential doctrines of Religion, "God's JUDGMENTS in physical and civil events,"

events," and "the efficacy of the good man's PRAYER," stand equally on one and the same Principle, the belief of that original connexion between the natural and moral World.

And here let me expostulate with those unhappy men, who, from a confessed truth that these more general desolations proceed entirely from natural causes, have too confidently concluded that they cannot be esteemed the warnings of a moral Governor: and therefore, after having been most alarmed by them while they were impending, have been the first to ridicule their own imbecility; which had led them, before they were aware, to the very brink of repentance. An instance of this unmanly conduct we saw amongst ourselves, when Heaven, in mercy, not long since shook a guilty land. A repetition of the stroke so alarmed and terrified its inhabitants, that, in their fright, they seemed in haste to give a specimen of their contrition and reformation. But a third shock not coming at the expected interval as that between the first and second, the rash project of amending their manners vanished like a morning mist; and they returned with equal speed to their accustomed follies and dissipations. And to what was all this owing but to a double blunder, unbecoming *a nation of Philosophers?* They had first entertained a false idea of these Warnings, as if they were phænomena out of nature, prodigious and miraculous; and when they came to understand that they were only the effects of physical causes, they then, by as shameful an ignorance, concluded that they had nothing in them formidable or threatening

tening to an impenitent World. Whereas a moderate share of NATURAL THEOLOGY would have taught them, that though these warnings by disasters were indeed the operations of the physical system, yet they were providentially connected with the moral, and pre-ordained to support its sanctions. But where was the wonder that that which began in Superstition should end in Irreligion? for, by a strange and monstrous kind of conception, extremes, in the moral world, are always begetting their opposites.

2. But now, in the last place, let us take a view of the state and situation of those men, who suppose that God does not uphold the World as the moral Ruler of it, but as the physical Dispenser only; and it is certain, that those, who deny these natural disasters to be connected with the moral system, can have no other idea of God's Government.

Such men, amidst all these dreadful warnings of alarming Nature, will find their condition to be most disconsolate and forlorn; their Principles having bereft them of those hopes which are ever springing in the breast of the religious man: who is taught both by Reason and Revelation to conclude, that these effects of God's displeasure against sin may be averted by sincere repentance. For though the irreligious Naturalist acknowledges a Governor of the universe, yet, as he supposes this Governor to direct all things by his natural attributes of *power* and *wisdom*, and not by his moral, of *goodness* and *justice*, his acknowledgment of a God affords him

no

no more security against his fears than if there were no God at all; and that the universe lay entirely at the mercy of Chance or Destiny; because a mere physical Director having no respect to the system of Rationals, their preservation or destruction will not be dependent on their behaviour, but on the purposes of the physical system; the support of which (for aught this Philosopher can tell) may require the destruction of Mankind, instead of their preservation: and the very next shock of the disordered Globe work those necessary changes in Matter and Motion which may conclude in the ruin and annihilation of its inhabitants.

Thus the hapless Unbeliever, while disordered Nature is sounding in his ears, hath no where to fly for refuge from his terrors: he sees himself in a fatherless and abandoned World, exposed to all the rage of deaf and unrelenting Elements: He may find, indeed, support and comfort in Religion; but it is below the dignity of his Philosophic character to seek it along with the superstitious herd: it being unworthy *a man of Science* to suppose, that the system of Nature was created, and is conducted, to serve any other Purposes than its own; or that the SUBLIME PRINCIPLE OF ATTRACTION was impressed upon Matter to bring about any other revolutions than of those vast bodies which are the objects of his learned contemplation.

In a word, every rational reflexion serves to establish the religious Principle of my text, as here explained.

It is shewn to be agreeable to Reason and to Religion, under the present constitution of things.

It

It is shewn to tend most to the glory of God, and to the peace and happiness of Man.

It is shewn that that *vain philosophy*, which discards this Principle from its creed, dishonours Providence, and most distresses Human life.

What have we then to do, but to regulate our practice, and repose our confidence, on a Principle so well established. A sincere, a speedy, and a perfect reformation will not fail to avert the anger of the Lord, now gone out against the sinful inhabitants of the Earth. I mean, a reformation of the general manners, where each of us, in our several stations, must concur to heal the breaches made in our excellent Constitution by our party-follies; to oppose the enormous progress of avarice and corruption; to check the wasting rage for pleasure and amusement; to shake off those unmanly luxuries crept into domestic life, some for the gratification of our appetites, but more, for the display of our vanities.

When we have done this, we have done our part. And then these *terrors of the Lord* will cease; or they will become harmless and even salutary to us. We shall, if it be our lot to meet that great day of *his coming*, foretold by our sacred Oracles, not only stand, with the man of morals, serene and fearless amidst the crash of falling worlds, but, with the religious man, become partaker of the *glories of the Lamb*, rise triumphant over them in those happier regions of perpetual stability and peace.

SERMON XIX.

Preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords, January 30, 1760.

ISAIAH xix. 13—14.

THE PRINCES OF ZOAN ARE BECOME FOOLS, THE PRINCES OF NOPH ARE DECEIVED; THEY HAVE ALSO SEDUCED EGYPT—THE LORD HATH MINGLED A PERVERSE SPIRIT IN THE MIDST THEREOF.

THE Prophet is here foretelling the disgraces and calamities which God was then about to bring upon a sinful People, at that time the most renowned for the wisdom of their civil Policy.—*The Counsel of the wise Counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish*, saith the Prophet: for the JUDGMENT was attended with all those circumstances of savage *brutality*, which most disgrace Civil Wisdom: *I will set* (says GOD) *the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his Brother, and every one against his Neighbour; City against City, and Kingdom against Kingdom.* How great a resemblance this denunci-

ation of divine vengeance bears to the history of the grand Rebellion, every man, who is not an utter stranger to the most disgraceful epoch of our history, will readily perceive; when *Brothers* of the same House, and *Neighbours* of the same *City*, hostilely separated into opposed Camps; when the Inhabitants of adjoining *Counties* divided, in mutual enmity, under their respective Leaders; and when the two *Kingdoms* of Scotland and Ireland renounced the protection of their common Sovereign, and insulted and invaded his imperial crown. For when a breach is once made in a well-framed Constitution, perfected by the wisdom, and regulated on the experience of ancient Policy, the confusion which follows it is always more outrageous, and frequently more incurable, than disorders arising in the looser and less perfect Forms of Government.

The miseries foretold in this Prophecy are represented as inflicted by the avenging hand of GOD.—*Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt— The Lord shall smite Egypt.* The mercy which followed is equally represented as the work of his all-gracious hand —*He shall* SMITE *and* HEAL *it* *.

And thus the total destruction of our Constitution, and the sudden and surprising recovery of it, when things were most desperate, have been ever considered, by serious men, as a manifest indication of the hand of GOD, which first in justice *smites*, and then with equal mercy, *heals* and restores.

* Ver. 22.

Indeed,

Indeed, all who believe the *moral government* of GOD, how much soever they may differ concerning his mode of administering it among Particulars, and how obscure soever his ways may appear in the tracts of private life, yet concur to acknowledge and to revere his visible interposition in the revolutions of States and Empires.

In the early years of this returning solemnity, while men's thoughts and expressions were under the influence of recent passions; the whole of the celebration might not, perhaps, so well answer the ends of a public humiliation: when *Characters* on the one hand intemperately painted, and *Comparisons*, on the other, impiously invented, turned an act of Worship into a day of Contention. But these were the unruly workings of a storm just then subsided. Time, which so generally corrupts other religious Rites, hath given a sobriety and a purity to the returning celebrations of This.

And as Providence is commonly seen, even in its most uncommon Operations, to work by second Causes, the sagacity and prudence of those who have of late supplied this Place, have been more usefully employed in investigating and collecting these Causes: From whence, more salutary lessons may be gathered, for the use of civil life, than are to be met with in any History of public revolutions, where mere human agency is supposed to have done most.

James the Ist received the crown of England, with the seeming advantage, but indeed with the real inconvenience of succeeding to a line of impe-

rious Monarchs, who, by a concurrence of various accidents, had been enabled to make bold incroachments on the liberty of the Subject, and the old genius of the Constitution. These incroachments had been almost sanctified by the regal glories of the last of that haughty race. But James, instead of providing against the impending mischiefs of so critical a situation, when a new interest then rising called loudly to set the balance even, took advantage of the Crown's over-weight to advance those occasional acts of intemperate Prerogative into a regulated System of arbritary power.

In these Mysteries of State he took early care to initiate his Son: who received them when he came to the succession, with much more good faith than they were delivered to him by his Father; and (as on that account it happened) with more fatal consequences to himself. For, what was only Policy in James, became Religion in the Martyr Charles: and King-craft is made of much more ductile stuff than Church-bigotry; at least it knows when to yield and when to act inflexibly; whereas the Policy which is *not of this world*, nor, I am afraid of the *other*, is apt to do both, unskilfully and perversely. Thus James favoured the Hierarchy, as it was a buttress to the Crown, Charles revered it as the Ordinance of Heaven: The Son therefore, to preserve the Order itself, fatally consented to exclude the Bishops from their seat in Parliament: but the Father would have avoided this error, and stopped the ruin in its first movement, since Bishops out of Parliament, he knew, could be of little service

vice to his Prerogative. And, on the same principle, we may conclude, that, had he found them already out of Parliament, he would never have risked his Crown for their preservation. Yet this, the virtuous Son resolved to do; and he stood the desperate hazard with the greatest complaisancy of Conscience.

If the civil rights of the People had for a long time been ill understood, or little regarded, the wonder was the less that the rights of Religion had been so grossly violated. These Princes held that all were to conform to the *Religion of the State*; and that, for every man to worship GOD in his own way, the Father thought was a factious, and the Son, an impious invasion of the Supremacy.

Least of all shall we think it strange that, amidst these errors in Government, neither of these Princes attended to that large accession of property and power, which was silently, but rapidly, devolving on the People. So that by the time Charles was most intent to push forward his Father's despotic System, the People were become rich by a long commercial peace: and therefore less disposed to bear, and more able to repel, what they deemed to be oppression.

Under these circumstances, for fourteen years together, they modestly and constitutionally prosecuted the Claim of their Rights, in the Courts of Justice and in the Courts of Legislature. They sought redress by Law, but the fountain of Justice, by running through the Palace, was become corrupted. They sought redress in Parliament, which

was often obtained; but as often violated or evaded as it was obtained; till, at length, the very door of redress was shut against them, and a long remission of Parliament deprived them of the last support of the miserable, the very *hope* of being relieved. For the ill-advised Sovereign chose to reign without Parliaments; poor and needy, in the style of a Cappadocian Monarch,

Mancipiis locuples, egens æris—

rather than be the opulent Head of a free and a free-giving People.

The Treasury having been long exhausted, and thus kept unreplenished, all men foresaw that on the least commotion, whether at home or abroad, a Parliament would be forced upon the Court. And the *Country Party*, as it was called, did not neglect to accelerate this remedy, by taking advantage of the indiscretions of a great Churchman, to kindle and inflame the liturgic heats in Scotland.

But as what was then called PURITANISM (which, in the subsequent confusions, split into many Sects of various denominations) was so intimately connected with this quarrel, and did so largely contribute to the confusions it produced, it may not be improper just to recount its origine and progress; the claims it made, and the treatment it received.

In the early times of Reformation, unhappy scruples arose amongst the Clergy concerning the *Government* of the national Church. But these captious men understood so little of religious rights, that

that they had no sooner formed a Party, than they thought themselves obliged in conscience to overthrow the established Hierarchy; and to erect what they called, the DISCIPLINE, in its place. Their first attack was by *remonstrances to Parliament:* and when that failed, by entering into criminal cabals, to extort, what, they found, would not be readily given up to them. But this factious Spirit, meeting with the able and vigorous administration of Elizabeth, was timely suppressed; and the very attempt to disturb so popular a Government brought upon them a general Odium. And here, in passing, it may not be amiss to observe, that while these English PURITANS, who embraced the abominable opinion of Calvin concerning Predestination, were struggling with the State for an *Establishment*, the Dutch REMONSTRANTS, who were raised, at the same time, by Providence to free the Church of Christ from the impiety of this Doctrine, never contended for more than a *Toleration.*

Hitherto the fault lay entirely on their side; who, in a seditious way, aimed at more than was their due. But they paid dearly for their folly; for, in this unsuccessful struggle, they lost, as is commonly the case in party-quarrels, what they had the best pretence to demand. For when their Enthusiasm, as a new Sect, was reasonably abated, and their factious temper, as an old one, had been vigorously opposed; they seemed well content to accept what they had at first wantonly rejected. But, they now met with an exasperated Government (too ready to return their insults), which, instead of

complying with this more sober request, enacted a number of penal statutes, to compel their conformity to the established Worship.

When James succeeded to the Crown of England, he came South with much prejudice against these *Disciplinarians*; from whose Brethren in the North he had undergone the most scandalous indignities; so that he was sufficiently indisposed to remit or soften the rigour of these penal Laws. His Son detested the Puritans, as they were the declared enemies of his Favourite Prelacy; and therefore, throughout the former part of his reign, treated them with such severity, (the Laws having made their enemies their judges, or, at least, their judges were become their enemies) that many of them abandoned their native Country for new settlements in America.

Men's civil and religious rights being thus equally trampled on, it is natural to believe, that, when the Country-interest first made head against the Court, the Patriots and the Puritans would meet half-way, to act in concert against oppressive Authority: Their GRIEVANCES for violated rights, and, what is more, their PRINCIPLES in favour of the doctrine of resistance, being precisely the same.

And now, Religion and Liberty become the united cry, the fatal Scene began to open. The disturbances in Scotland forced the King back upon Parliaments. The first he called was ready to restore the Constitution, and preserve the rights of the Crown, when he unskilfully dissolved it. The

next, into whose hands he fell, never remitted of their remorseless vengeance till they had destroyed the King the Constitution, and Themselves.

It unfortunately happened, that the Sovereign's frequent breach of faith had made the Patriots so diffident of his Word, that they would find no ground on which to begin a reformation, but that whereon, if ever they became factious, they might erect a Tyranny of their own: I mean that fatal, unconstitutional Law, which impowered the Parliament to sit till it should be pleased to dissolve itself.

When this point was secured, they began indeed as if they had no other intention than to reform those gross enormities of Prerogative, which had well nigh overturned our free Constitution, and rendered it despotic. And in this generous labour the greatest and wisest in those two august assemblies heartily concurred: All they who afterwards became the temporary Guard and most shining Ornament of that unhappy Monarch's military Court. And what was ineffectual to the safety of their Master; they gained for themselves that lasting glory in the records of History, which disinterested Virtue only can procure.

The King had now made ample satisfaction for all his former miscarriages: And our free State was fully vindicated, in a regular and parliamentary way. The two Houses had now obtained all the security for the enjoyment of their recovered rights, which the nature of the Constitution would afford; and were, therefore, in all reason, now to perform their promises,

promises, of " making the King, as soon as he should be pleased to give them this security, *the greatest and most glorious Monarch of his time.*"

But the King made his concessions with so ill a grace, that they only served to remind the Public of his former breaches of faith, and to revive their diffidence in the royal Word.

This supplied the Demagogues of the House with a shew of necessity for some *further security* against the King's return to his old mode of Government. But all, which, by the nature of the Constitution, could be given, had been given already. Yet this would not induce these men to desist: they held it pardonable if they themselves made *one breach* in the Constitution, when it was to prevent the Crown from ever making more; and therefore, with great confidence in their Cause, they demanded the MILITIA.

When Charles, who, till now, kept granting all they required, had got them at this advantage, the making *breaches* in the Constitution (the very thing which gave them all their credit against him), he suddenly stopt short. He found himself in a condition to divide the People with them; and, what was more to his reputation, to draw the wiser and worthier part of the Parliament along with him. An appeal was now made to the Sword, and a war immediately ensued.

At this sad period, when *Patriotism* had degenerated into *Faction*, the King for once acted ably, and seized the lucky opportunity of putting his Parliament in the wrong.

And

And in the wrong they surely were. Yet, in the majority of those who demanded this *unconstitutional* security, there was not any formed design against the Monarchy, it was rather an ill-timed provision and overcare for their own safety *.

I suppose it to be a truth unquestioned in Politics, "That the UTMOST SECURITY which a Constitution can give for the observance of a public regulation, is a GOOD SECURITY." The indemnity of Particulars, the private safety of Those who extorted these royal concessions, is another matter. The Patriots plainly understood they had mortally offended a vindictive King; for though the Martyr could forgive, yet the Monarch was of a different temper; and that, sooner or later, they or their families might fall a sacrifice to his resentments: For well they knew, that, although the People would be still likely enough to interpose in behalf of *Patriotism* against the violation of Parliamentary Establishments; yet there were small hopes that they would ever be brought to move in Court quarrels, on the private complaints of the *Patriots*.

This was Policy, indeed; but a Policy disclaimed by Public Virtue. For when the question is reduced to this, Whose interest is to take place; that of the Public, or of Particulars? the *true* Patriot will not hesitate in his choice. But the *False* did here, what is the essential of his Policy to do, he

* One who perhaps had this formed design speaks the very sense of those who had it not, in these words—if a war of this nature must be determined by treaty, &c. Ludlow, fol. ed. p. 52 at the top.

covered

covered his own interest under that of the Public: and being well persuaded that himself was in danger, he endeavoured to persuade others, that the Constitution was so likewise. And he was but too successful in the imposition.

This may seem strange; for nothing is more placable than a provoked People, when they have brought their Governors to reason. But we must remember, the Patriots had a powerful Ally in this quarrel; who having yet received no satisfaction at all, were well disposed, and at the same time well able, by the nature of their Profession, to keep up the rage and apprehensions of the People. This neglect of their so trusty Coadjutors may, at first sight, appear still more strange; That they, who had united in a common quarrel; whose several rights had been alike invaded; who had laboured under equal sufferings; and who, from their first confederacy, had served the CAUSE with equal zeal and success; that of these confederated Parties, the One should have gained every thing which Patriots could desire, and the Other only (which, but to the malice of a Puritan, could be no satisfaction at all) the exclusion of the Bishops from their seat in Parliament. For what less could be expected, when the *Patriots* had procured the abolition of illegal and tyrannic Courts; a Declaration of the People's Rights; and a triennial Parliament; than that the *Puritans* should recover, what the law of nature itself had given them, a full Toleration for their *Discipline* and mode of worship? But so little was this part of natural law understood, that it is very probable,

probable, had a *Toleration* been demanded by the Patriots, the King and his Divines would have broken with the Parliament on that Point, just as they afterwards did, on the abolition of Episcopacy. It is very certain, that had the King offered a *Toleration* to the Puritans, they would have rejected it on the very same principle: For it was an axiom in the Theology of both, THAT TO CONNIVE AT ERROR WAS TO PARTAKE IN THE GUILT OF IT. Hence the King was naturally inclined to persecute Sectaries; and the Puritans to overturn Establishments. Now, things being in this train, when the Patriots, anxious for themselves, as before for the Public, insisted on further security for the royal concessions, they found an easy way of bringing the Puritans (who as yet had gained nothing) into their measures; which was, by making one of their *unconstitutional securities* to be, the ABOLITION of EPISCOPACY.

But the sword was already drawn; and not in behalf of the CONSTITUTION on either side; for the King, who now professed to defend it, still mistook his own Administration for it; and the Parliament, which levied war on a point *unconstitutional*, was soon governed by men who professed to overthrow it; so that the sword was not likely to be sheathed, till Tyranny on the one hand, or Anarchy on the other, had introduced a new species of slaughter in place of the old; and Judicial murders had succeeded to the Military.

It is true, that in the course of this mutual carnage, each Party, in its turn, offered and accepted proposals

proposals for peace. But this was not from any real desire or hope of obtaining it, but to cajole the People to whom that side would have been extreme odious, which had appeared averse to laying down their arms. However, partly through the experienced calamities of war, and partly from men's better knowledge of one another, by means of those reciprocal messages for peace, the better sort of Courtiers grew more averse to despotic rule, and the honester Patriots more disgusted with popular devices; which might have produced some good effect, had not these dawnings of returning sense and sobriety been suddenly overcast by the unexpected appearance of a New Party, rising out of the ferment of the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE; A swarm of armed Enthusiasts, who out-witted the Patriots, out-prayed the Puritans, and out-fought the Cavaliers; and, with the most rapid progress, overturned and desolated all before them, in their extreme haste to set up the fifth monarchy of King Jesus.

Thus fell the unhappy King in a popular storm; raised, indeed, by himself; but inflamed by his enemies, even after he had corrected the disorder of those unruly Elements which gave it birth, and were now ready, as he saw too late, to bear down all things in their course.

The King had many Virtues, but all, of so unsociable a complexion as to do him neither service nor credit.

His *Religion*, in which he was sincerely zealous, was over-run with Scruples: and the simplicity, if not

not the Purity, of his *Morals*, was debased by Casuistry.

His *natural affections* (a rare virtue in that high station) were so excessive as to render him a slave to all his Kin: and his *social*, so moderate as only to enable him to lament, not to preserve his friends and servants.

His *Knowledge* was extensive, though not exact: and his *Courage* clear, though not keen: yet his Modesty far surpassing his magnanimity, his *Knowledge* only made him obnoxious to the doubts of his more ignorant Ministers: and his *Courage*, to the irresolution of his less adventurous Generals.

In a word, his Princely qualities were neither great enough nor bad enough to succeed in that most difficult of all attempts, the enslaving a free and jealous People.

The full conviction of this truth made LAUD (who was not so despicable a Politician as we commonly suppose him) upon seeing his Coadjutor, STRAFFORD, led out to slaughter, lament his fate in these emphatic and indignant words,—*He served a Prince who knew not how to be, nor to be made, Great* *.

The execrable Parricide which followed, cannot, indeed, in strictness of speech, be charged upon the Patriots and Puritans; who, when it was too late, did all in their power to prevent it: However, without changing the nature of things, they cannot be totally acquitted of that horrid impiety; since their rejecting, from selfish and perverse motives,

* History of his own Life and Troubles, p. 178.

the

the full reparation the King had made to the *Public;* because he would not agree to an *unconstitutional security* for THEMSELVES, was the unavoidable occasion of all the mischiefs that ensued. For though no man shall be made to answer for the evils which, through human perversity, arise from the faithful discharge of his duty: yet no casuistry will acquit him, even of the undesigned mischiefs which spring naturally from his unjust pursuits*.

These confusions kept increasing, under different Forms, each more ridiculous or more horrid than the other, till this miserable Nation, now become the scorn and opprobrium of the whole Earth, at length grew tired, rather than ashamed, of its repeated follies. In this temper they hastily recalled the Heir of the Monarchy: And as the cause of all their miseries had been the insisting on unreasonable conditions from the Crown, they did like men driven out of one extreme, who never take breath till they have plunged themselves into another, they

* Col. Axtel, one of the Regicides, said at the Gallows,—"I must truly tell you that before these late wars, "it pleased the Lord to call me by his grace, *through the* "*work of the* MINISTRY; and afterwards keeping a day "of humiliation in fasting and prayer with MR. SAMUEL "ASH, MR. LOVE, MR. WOODCOCK, and other MI-"NISTERS in *Laurence Lane*, they did so clearly state "the cause of the Parliament, that I was fully convinced in "my own conscience of the *justness of the war*, and there-"upon engaged in the Parliament service, which (as I "did and do believe) was the CAUSE OF THE LORD; "I ventured my life freely for it, and NOW DIE FOR IT." State Tryals, vol. II. 3d ed. p. 415.

strove

strove to atone for their unjust demands upon the virtuous Father by the most lavish concessions to his flagitious Son; who succeeded to the Inheritance with all those advantages of an undefined Prerogative, which an ambitious Prince could wish for the foundation of an arbitrary System. A sad presage to the Friends of Liberty, that their generous labours were not yet at an end! Indeed, within less than half a century, the old family-projects, taken up again by the two last princes of this line, revived the public quarrel. But it was conducted under happier Auspices, not by the assistance of SECTARIES, but by the NATIONAL CHURCH: and concluded in the final establishment of a free Constitution.

And now, to reflect a little on this melancholy Story. Never did Piety and Politics, in their friendly association for the public service, project any thing more useful to Church and State, than the institution of this annual Solemnity; which serves to keep awake an awful sense of Providence, to create an abhorrence of licentiousness, and to cherish a generous but sober affection for Liberty.

Nor was there ever any period in the English Story so fruitful of important Lessons for the use of civil Life as that which, with so much shame, we now commemorate; and which, but for this use, the wisdom of Government would, I conceive, have, long ago, buried in oblivion.

Of the various instructions, which both PATRIOTS and MINISTERS may gather from these crimes and

follies of our Forefathers, I shall beg leave but just to mention two or three of the most important.

I. The PATRIOT may learn, from the *immediate* cause of the War, that when, at any time, his brave and successful struggles for his Country have restored again the disordered balance of power in a free Community, he may learn, I say, to be content with that Security for the enjoyment of his labours which the nature of the Constitution affords; and not think of demanding such branches of the Prerogative in hostage, which, if given, would destroy that very balance, for the preservation of which, he pretends to require them. On this rock the Patriots of that time ran; which cast them, stript of their popularity, on the unfaithful and abandoned ground of their Adversaries: for what material difference is there between acting UNCONSTITUTIONALLY for the sake of monarchic power, and acting thus for the sake of popular? And whenever the Patrons of liberty shall give this advantage to the Enemies of it, as much of that popularity which the first lose, the other will gain; and so, the contest becoming more equal, *Force* alone must decide: which cannot but end in the ruin of the Constitution, after it is become a principle with both, to alter and unsettle it.

II. The PATRIOT may learn from the SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE, to beware of all innovations not strictly *constitutional*, how right soever they may appear to the friends of Justice, or equal to the

the friends of Liberty. And could any thing be more specious than that fair distribution of power and profit, in what was called the NEW MODEL? The members of the two Houses had ingrossed to themselves all the posts and offices in the Military. This raised suspicions amongst their people, that men who got so greatly by the war would never be very forward to put an end to it. Hereupon the Parliament, in a fit of affected generosity, passed an *Ordinance*, which separated the interests of the two bodies, by not permitting a Member of either House to receive a Commission in the Army. But what was the effect of this separation? A deluge of independent Republicans broke at once into that Camp, which was formed, or pretended to be formed, for the *defence of King and Parliament*. Such was the sad issue of an UNCONSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENCE arising from the *new model!* And all this was, to avoid the imaginary danger of a *dependence* strictly *constitutional:* that is, a *dependence* of the parts on one another; a *dependence* as necessary for the regular motions of the civil machine of free Government, as any the like subordinate combinations in physical or artificial bodies.

I. Again, MINISTERS OF STATE may learn, from the faults of Charles's administration, not to dispense with the royal Word for the sake of some present convenience; which (besides the public mischiefs that attend the violation of a thing so sacred) is indeed the cancelling THEIR OWN best security. When the King's ablest servant had, in the great wants of

the Treasury, encouraged his Master to break his faith, so often pledged to his Parliament, never more to exert any of those branches of baleful Prerogative, which they had so often fulminated; he little suspected that he was opening the way to his own ruin, by habituating his royal Master to think slightly of his promises, in the number of which was protection to himself. And when he understood the whole severity of his fate, which this policy had brought upon him, it was with no good grace that he exclaimed, *Put not your trust in Princes, for there is no* FAITH *in them.*

II. Another lesson MINISTERS OF STATE may learn from the transactions of those times, of no less importance to their Master's interest, and their own honour, which is, never in their Sovereign's distresses to throw their own miscarriages upon Him, and to turn all his graces upon themselves. A faithful servant to his Prince (and such a one the two Charles's had) will procure friends for his Master; and provide for himself only through his Master's favour: such a Servant will give honest Counsels; yet if others be followed, he will excuse, with all his wit and authority, the share his Master had in promoting them. But it was the hard fate of the Martyr Charles to be commonly served by Ministers so ungenerous, that they were the first to decry unsuccessful Counsels though given by themselves, and to throw them upon the obstinacy, the bigotry, and the uxorious folly of the Sovereign. A baseness of conduct which contributed as much to make the King odious

odious to the Public, as all the intrigues of the Long Parliament. It is no wonder that these unfaithful Servants took the advantage of his misfortunes to press him for dignities and places of trust and power, at a time when such things afforded little benefit to themselves, yet were of infinite disservice to their Master. For these ill-timed honours exasperated the personal enmities of the Leaders in Parliament against these Ministers, and indisposed them to any terms of accommodation with the King: For they had reasonably laid their account to share with the Courtiers, in the Sovereign's good graces, whenever a Peace should be brought about: but now they were made desperate, by finding that the King had nothing left to give.

In the last place, I would observe, that this struggle between King and Parliament, before each side flew to Arms, will serve to confirm a general truth of much importance to all Parties, That, in civil contentions, the OPPOSITION (to use a modern term) is much apter to degenerate into faction, than a MINISTRY to run into despotic measures. For the very attempt to decry an Administration, will, by degrees, render it sage; but the application of *ministerial* power against an *Opposition*, makes *Opposition* popular at once; and popularity presently runs into licence. Thus, in fact, it happened here. Before either side had taken the field, the King's Administration was grown public-spirited, and the Parliament was become a Faction.

To conclude all, Let no lover of his Country be too ready to take scandal at the contentions to which

free States are so obnoxious. Civil commotions have the same use, in the moral world, that stormy and tempestuous seasons have in the physical. In the stagnation of a continued calm, the best system sickens and decays; but these periodic agitations stifle corruption in the seed, give new vigour to the languid Constitution, and enable the vital Principles of it to perform their destined operations. It is true, indeed, when a storm is let loose upon either System, it ravages and destroys what it was meant to support and actuate. The *System of Nature* has the Providence of God to curb the blind violence of stubborn matter, which else, in the impetuosity of its course, would soon reduce itself to its former Chaos. The *Political System* has nothing but the Providence of Government to sustain it against its own fury, from falling into Anarchy. But the Providence of Government is weak and bounded; and needeth all the assistance of good subjects to strengthen its hands, and enforce obedience to its insulted Authority. It was the rejection of this salutary duty in some, and the careless discharge of it in others, which, at the fatal period we now commemorate, was the last cause of all the desolation that ensued.

SERMON XX.

Preached before the Incorporated Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; on Friday, February 21, 1766.

REVELATION of St. JOHN, chap. x. ver. 11.

AND HE SAID UNTO ME, THOU MUST PROPHESY AGAIN, BEFORE MANY PEOPLES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES, AND KINGS.

GO and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was the great Commission intrusted by our Divine Master to his Disciples. And we know how faithfully they discharged their trust; these latter ages of extended Commerce having discovered the most evident marks and traces of their footsteps, in every Region, how remote soever, of the then known World.

But there was a NEW WORLD to be disclosed, another Hemisphere to be explored; though reserved for those daring Adventurers who in these later times have pierced through the trackless waste of the great Atlantic Ocean.

And for this Orphaned World the Holy Spirit made the like charitable provision.—Where the future fortunes of the Church, from its humble Cradle to its inthronization in glory, are foretold to St. John, in a regular series of Prophetic visions, enigmatically represented, the Apostle sees *a mighty angel descend from Heaven*; *a rainbow surrounding his head*; *his face like the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire**. In this so graphical a description of the Son of God, clothed in all the pomp and majesty of his Father, the *attitude* is most observable; *His* RIGHT FOOT WAS ON THE SEA, *and his left on the Earth* †: An attitude expressive of his ready Providence addressed, in the fulness of time, to unveil this NEW WORLD so long concealed in the bosom of the Deep; and pointing out to his Church the religious use that was to be made of this discovery. For the angel having *sworn* (which denotes the revelation to be a matter of high importance) and intimated (by the words, *there shall be time no longer*) that the consideration of time is not to be taken in ‡, the Subject being of a distant period; he addresses himself to St. John, who here represents the *Church*, in the words of my text—*Thou must prophesy* AGAIN *before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and Kings.*—As much as to say, "The Church hath been faithful to her great Trust, in all things which have been hitherto in her power to discharge. But a time will come, when this mighty labour, so

* Rev. chap. x. ver. 1. † Ver. 2.
‡ ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. ver. 6.

success-

successfully undergone, in the conversion of the *Old World*, is to be repeated in the *New*. For the Church must PROPHESY AGAIN, or preach the Gospel for the *second time* to many new-discovered People and Nations." *To prophesy*, signifying here what it does in many other places of the New Testament, to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel.

Hence it appears, that to preach the Gospel to the *new World* when discovered, is not a mere act of simple Charity, but a work of indispensable duty.

The providential Discovery was at length made; and though, in itself, replete with all the seeds of temporal and spiritual Blessings, yet was it the immediate occasion of the most infernal mischiefs. For as in the *old* World the Devil stept in to intercept the first fruits of Creation due to the all-bounteous Author, so was it, in the *new*: While, under the mask of Religion, if ever Popery might be said to wear that mask, the Evil One excited his Agents to desolate this late-discovered Continent, by the butchery and sacrifice of millions; and all, for having more gold than they knew how to use, and more land than they knew how to cultivate. But while these *Dogs of Hell were crying havock*, and the Inhabitants of the *new* World on the brink of extirpation, God raised up his chosen Instruments in the *old* to restore Christianity to its health and purity, then labouring in its last pangs under popish tyranny and superstition. For the Gospel, long sequestered and shut up, was of necessity to be known again before it could be *preached* AGAIN. The

REFOR-

REFORMATION OF RELIGION once more opened this living Source. And then it was that the Sense of my Text became apparent; and that the Church first addressed itself to this undertaking.

Nor was this the only benefit. The Church of Rome itself, in order to support its shaken usurpation, was obliged in this, as in other palliations of its abuses, to vie with us in the discharge of this *second Mission*, in which our venerable Corporation has borne so large a Share.

I am but little acquainted with the history of its pious Establishment; but I reasonably suppose it to have been founded in obedience to this SECOND CALL: and, consequently, that the peculiar objects of its exalted Charity were the barbarous Americans, so long kept hid *in the Shadow of Death*.

I. Our Colonies, indeed, opened the Door to this spiritual Enterprize; and were, in reason, to be paid for their pains with some portion of the heavenly Manna; not so much for relief of their own wants, as for the wants of their Posterity. Our Colonies were formed and first peopled by religious and conscientious men; who, made uneasy at home by their intolerant Brethren, left the *Old World*, to enjoy, in peace, that first and chief prerogative of Man, *the free worship of God according to his own Conscience:* At one time PURITANS driven over by the Episcopal Church; at another, CHURCHMEN forced thither by the Presbyterian Faction; just as the revolutions of State threw the civil power into one or the other hand. For it must be remembered (though

to

to the opprobrium of humanity) that, of all the errors of that Antichristian Church from which the Gospellers were, with derision, expelled, this most abominable of all, Persecution for Opinions, stuck the fastest; and after having tarnished the splendor of almost every Protestant Community in its turn, was the latest, and with most difficulty, shaken off.

Now, amongst the general *Wants* of new Colonies, composed of such kind of Men, Religion is rarely one. Of this our Colonists carried over an ample Cargo; sufficient for themselves and their Posterity: and might therefore have been safely left to live upon their own Stock.

So that had this been all, our important Mission had not stopped at the Door, but only taken advantage of its opening, to address ourselves directly to the *Gentiles*.

But though the zeal of the first Colonists (rekindled by this violent remove to the other Hemisphere) kept Religion alive and active, yet their Poverty disabled them from supplying fuel to the vital flame; I mean, provision for a preaching Ministry. Insomuch, that, without the kindly assistance of their Mother-Country, this new Christian Commonwealth had been, as the Roman historian expresses it of the imperial City in its Cradle, *Res unius Ætatis*. Against this danger, a timely aid was to be provided. And the Founders of our Society not being *Fanatics*, would not intrust the care to *Fanatics:* a People always ready, yet never fitted for one of these spiritual Enterprizes; indeed, so forward

forward as to go out upon a *second call*, naked and pennyless like those holy men, who, with the large viaticum of Miracles, went out upon the *first*. It was thought fit therefore to assign a decent maintenance for these late labourers in the Lord's Vineyard; who, having *stood all the day idle*, were called, at the *last hour*, to their work. To this the Charter of Incorporation alludes; where, speaking of the purpose of the Society to appoint Missionaries to the Colonies, it adds—*which, by reason of their poverty, are destitute and unprovided of a* MAINTENANCE *for Ministers, and the public worship of God.*

This purpose hath been hitherto soberly pursued: our Missionaries to America having carefully avoided the Conduct of those of Rome, into the Levant; whose principal design hath hitherto been to reduce the distressed Churches of Greece and Asia to a submission to the Papal Tyranny.

Notwithstanding this sage and decent conduct, certain of the Colonies, where the Established Church is *Presbyterian*, and still in its antient spirit of PURITY, have taken offence at our Mission exercised in their quarters, though only for the service of the dispersed Members of the *Episcopal* Church, residing amongst them.

Such a behaviour in a People, where wealth and Civil Faction have, as usual, inflamed religious zeal, is enough to remind us of that crisis, when the Disciples of *Jesus* are directed *to shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them.*

Nor would such a Secession lead us from the proper

proper business of the SOCIETY. For though a Mission to the Colonies was first in the execution, yet, as appears from what hath been said, it was only secondary in the original Scheme.

Here, then, we might well leave these contentious People to themselves, did not a miserable circumstance still call for our rejected Charity: I mean, the spreading GENTILISM in the Colonies themselves. Not a brutal ignorance of God, as amongst the savage Natives; but a blasphemous contempt of his holy dispensations, amongst our *Philosophic Colonists*. The Origine of which folly was, however, no more than this——

The rich product of the Plantations soon supplied the Colonists with all the *conveniencies of life*. And men are no sooner at their ease, than they are ready addressed to pleasure. So that the second Venture of our Colonists was for the *luxuries of social life*: amongst which, the Commodity called FREETHINKING was carefully consigned to them, as that which would give a relish and seasoning to all the rest. For in this close union of Sense and Reason in our Nature, the Man is at unrest, till each part be properly accommodated. While the body is content with a temperate enjoyment of its appropriated Good, the mind finds its pleasure in the pursuit of Knowledge, and in the practice of Virtue. But when the body plunges into the luxury of Sense, the mind will extravagate through all the regions of a viciated Imagination. And these corporeal and intellectual Vices supporting one another,

another, the ravages they make of Humanity are not to be controlled.

Thus it came to pass, that the very People, whose Fathers were driven for conscience-sake into *the waste and howling Wilderness*, is now as ready to laugh at that BIBLE, the most precious relick of their ruined Fortunes, as at their Ruffs and Collar-bands.

Against this outrageous Folly (the sure prognostic of a falling State) the dearest Charity requires us to oppose all our spiritual endeavours, before we go on upon the great Duty to which we are summoned in my text.

II. This brings me to that point, which I next proposed to consider, *Our Mission to the Gentiles.* And here, in entering on the subject, it may not be unuseful to observe the advantages which Popery hath over the Reformed, in training up their Labourers to this Harvest. For we should be unjust to ROME not to acknowledge its zeal to be equal to that of other Churches, in displaying the Christian Banner throughout the habitable world.

To see their advantages in a true light, we should consider what are the proper qualifications of one of these *Soldiers of Christ*—What he is disposed to do, and what he is ready to suffer, in this religious warfare, amongst Heathens, whether civilized or barbarous—He must have an ardent zeal and unwearied diligence; Appetites subdued to all the distresses of want, and a Mind superior to all the terrors of mortality.

Now, these qualities and habits, their several *Orders*

Orders of Religious (from whence their Missionaries are taken) very early labour to inculcate. One quality is more deeply implanted by *this* Order, another by *that*; and the most necessary and essential are formed in *all:* thus all the monastic Institutions kindle and keep alive that exalted charity which ends in a Self-sacrifice for the salvation of our Brother.

The JESUITES subdue the Will by the severe discipline of blind obedience: to stand wherever they are placed, and to run wherever they are called. The CARTHUSIANS subdue the appetites by a tedious course of bodily labours and mortifying abstinences: and the Order called THE CONGREGATION OF ST. PAUL, subdues the whole man: For, in a sense as peculiar to them as to their holy Patron, they *die daily*; the observance of their whole rule consisting in one continued meditation on the King of Terrors.

Nor is this all. The several *Orders*, like Workmen who travel separately on the various parts of the same Machine, each of them to be disposed by the Master-Artist, in its proper place and to its destined use; the *Orders*, I say, send their Subjects, thus prepared, to the *College* DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, to receive their last finishing, by instruction in the Languages, the Manners and the Customs of the barbarous Nations, to whose conversion they are appointed and addressed. And, indeed, without so long and regular a preparation, it is not in Nature, whatever Grace may effect, for any man chearfully, and, at the same time, soberly to undergo all the accumulated distresses, ever ready to overtake a faithful Missionary.

For

For want of these advantages, a Protestant Society, like ours, hath been too frequently obliged to take up with subjects from amongst men of ruined fortunes; such, whose impotency of mind have shewn them unable to bear either Poverty or Riches. Or else from amongst heated Zealots, totally unqualified for every sober and important work.

And, indeed, when we consider the greatness of our wants in this kind, we should be tempted to wish for a COLLEGE, destined for the supplial of a sufficient number of able Missionaries in constant succession, brought up, from their early youth, in such a discipline as may be judged best fitted for such a service. And here it may not be impertinent to observe, that should the Governors of that famous UNIVERSITY, to which a munificent Benefactor hath bequeathed a large estate for the erection of a NEW COLLEGE, be at a loss to execute his intention in such a manner as may give new vigour to the decayed Spirit of Learning and Religion, they may find in a COLLEGE DE PROPAGANDA FIDE, an establishment which would interfere with no other, and would give additional sanctity to all the rest.

Having premised thus much, I come more directly to *Our Mission to the Gentiles*; considered in obedience to the Command, to *Prophesy* AGAIN *before many peoples and nations*; that is to say, Barbarians *bond and free*. These latter, the Aborigines of the Country, Savages without Law or Religion, are the principal Objects of our Charity. Their temporal, as well as spiritual conditions calls loudly

loudly for our assistance; and more especially as *civilizing* will be found a necessary step to *conversion*.

The benevolent Spirit of Antiquity, which set their Heroes and Lawgivers on reforming the savage manners of their barbarous Neighbours, and communicating to them the blessings of CIVIL LIFE, as divine as it appears, hath been yet outdone in the Charity of these later times, which sends Missionaries amongst the wild inhabitants of the new World, with the greater blessing of the Gospel. But the constant ill success of this glorious Undertaking, hath been a long time matter of grief to all good men. Something therefore must needs be much amiss, to defeat a purpose which Grace and Nature conspire to advance. And, if we search carefully into it, we shall find it to be this, *the preaching of it to savage and brutal Men.* For the GOSPEL, plain and simple as it is, and fitted in its nature for what it was ordained to effect, requires an intellect something above that of a Savage to apprehend. Nor is it at all to the dishonour of our holy Faith, that such a one must be taught a previous Lesson; and first of all instructed in the *emollient arts of life.* And it is not one of the least benefits of SOCIETY, that, at the time it teaches us to improve every bodily accommodation, it enlarges and enlightens the understanding by the activity which the mind exercises in improving those accommodations.

For want of this previous culture, it hath happened, that when, by the unwearied labour of the Missionary, numbers of these Savages have been baptized into the Faith, such Converts have never

long preserved, nor were they able to propagate among their Tribes, the *Christianity* they had been taught; but successive Missions have found, the work was ever to begin a-new.

From whence we conclude, that they set out at the wrong end; for, to make the Gospel *understood*, much more to propagate and establish it, these Barbarians should have been first taught the *civil arts of life*. And, indeed, to civilize a barbarous People is, in itself, a work of such exalted charity, that to find it neglected, when a further and far nobler end than the *arts of life* may be procured by it, is matter of infinite astonishment.

We justly censure the Popish Missionaries for their ill-directed zeal in propagating a *Commentitious Gospel*, for pure and genuine Christianity. But then we must be so fair to confess that, in the preparatory part of their Mission, their conduct and address have been so humane and rational, as to be well worthy of our imitation. Nor need this give scandal to any good Protestant. Our great Master himself hath recommended to the *Children of light* the Example of the *Children of this World*, because, says he, *these are wiser in their generation*; that is, they are more skilful than the *Children of light*, in ADAPTING MEANS TO ENDS.

This learned Audience easily understands that, by the *Children of this World*, I mean the JESUITES: they are emphatically so. Now these men have, both in South and North America, successfully practised the method I here presume to recommend: which is, first of all, to CIVILIZE the subjects

subjects of our Mission. The steps they took to effect this great purpose were no less judicious than the project itself was noble and benevolent. They began with teaching the Savages the Art of AGRICULTURE; of all the civil arts, the most essential, as it soonest reduces men from a roving wandering life into settled habitations, the first great bond of the Social State. The Provinces of *Paraguay* and the Island of *California* do, for this blessing, proclaim them the Benefactors of Mankind: And had they but taught the ETERNAL GOSPEL in its *purity*, at the time they taught the transitory arts of life in their *integrity*, they would have deserved all the praise, and much of the Power they aspired to.

But in all this affair, the awful Justice of Providence on the Instruments is no less conspicuous than his Blessing on the Work; which, when considered together, will afford an useful warning to Mankind.

This SOCIETY OF JESUS, as is too well known, had, from their very first establishment, in direct opposition to the professed end of their institution, and in defiance of the sacred name they had assumed, immerged themselves in the worst part of civil intrigues; which they carried on in so flagitious a manner, that there is hardly a Court in Christendom (into most of which they had insinuated themselves) where they have not left manifest traces of their Antichristian Politics, in seditions and assassinations, sanctified and supported on the two main pillars of their system, *relaxed Morals* and *Papal Omnipotency*.

At length, after having rioted in these disorders

for a century and an half, they conceived, either out of humanity or avarice, the noble project of civilizing the inland Inhabitants of South America; whom the Spaniards and Portuguese, on the East and West, had, by their diabolic treatment, rendered so outrageous against their Persecutors, that the fiercest beasts of prey were a more desirable neighbourhood.

In this condition the Missionary Jesuites found these persecuted Indians: and, for the ease and safety (as they pretended) of the Christian Colonies on each side, they set upon the desperate project of taming them to humanity: which at length indeed they effected; though with infinite labour and prodigious slaughter of the brethren of the Order.

However, the attempt succeeded: and the Jesuites, out of these wild and rabid tribes, founded so equal and powerful a Republic, as by their virtues to disgrace the neighbouring Colonies, and by their Policy to give umbrage to the two Catholic Monarchs, to whom those Colonies belong.

For the FATHERS, now Fathers indeed, and worthy of their name, *the Fathers of a People*, seeing the morals of the surrounding Colonies incurably corrupt, could find no other effectual means of securing the infant virtue of their new establishments from the contagion of Spanish and Portuguese manners, than by a total exclusion of all commerce and communication between them.

This served for a pretence to the two monarchs (whose sovereignty over Paraguay the Fathers acknowledged) to take to themselves the fruits of that Sovereignty,

Sovereignty, now become a morsel delicious enough to excite a regal appetite.

They therefore entered into a kind of Partition-Treaty to share Paraguay between them; a Treaty which is likely to end in the ruin of this long-envied and detested Order: Indignant Providence seeming to have decreed, as a lesson to mankind, that while, for the sake of Humanity, this glorious work should be preserved, that yet for the sake of divine Justice, these unworthy instruments, who with impunity had so long wantoned in civil mischief, and confounded and insulted all things sacred and profane, should at length fall by their first virtuous project.

But we, who have GOD and the Monarch on our side, have nothing of this to fear. On the contrary, we have every thing to encourage us in this arduous task; which is now rendered more promising and easy, by the large dominions lately acceded to the British empire in America. Our entrance into the heart of these barbarous Nations being now no longer interrupted and traversed by the frauds, the false insinuations, and the malicious Tales of our European Rivals.

The *spiritual* benefits arising from the labour of *civilizing* are many and substantial. At present, the Savages, (who have sense enough to see that the Europeans keep many things from them of high importance to their welfare) observing in us, while busied only in our Gospel Mission, a total disregard to their temporal interests, are difficultly brought to think, that the spiritual matters, pressed upon them, are of much importance either to them-

selves or their Teachers. But when they have been first of all so sensibly obliged by us as to be redeemed from the miseries of a brutal life, and set at ease by the security, and made happy by the accommodations of Society, they will naturally give a grateful and serious attention to their Benefactors, instructing them in sublimer truths, and directing them to still more substantial happiness. In a word, From merciless enemies, ever addressed to ravage and desolate the borders of our Colonies, we shall make them our cordial Friends, ready to embrace peace; a peace, not forced upon them by the terror of our arms, or feigned by them through the allurements of treacherous Presents, but immovably established by gratitude and love, and further supported by the mutual advantages of HONEST COMMERCE.

But, alas! we are yet far from this glorious Term of our labours. The hinderances have been many—Partly from the *qualities* of the Missionaries, and in part from the ravenous *pursuits* of our Colonists.

Of the Missionaries, some have been over-heated with that Fanaticism which disposes men to an utter contempt of *worldly things:* so that, instead of teaching the Savages the benefits of social life, and recommending civil manners to their roving Tribes, they are much rather inclined to throw aside their own, and accommodate themselves with the dried skins and parched corn of the Natives. Others of a cooler turn and lower form of Superstition, took it into their heads, that the Vices of improved life (as they may be now gathered in their full bloom

amongst the Colonists) would more indispose the Americans to the precepts of the Gospel, than their present state of brutality incapacitate them from apprehending the doctrines of it: and therefore, on the whole, thought it best to keep their Converts shut out from the advantages of so dangerous a society.

But, without question, the obstinate perseverance in this fatal measure is chiefly owing to the false and inhumane policy of the Colonists. A policy common to them all, which makes them despise and set at nought even the horrors of a *Savage War*, for the sake of an unequal Traffic between the improved and unimproved gifts of all-bounteous Nature.

From the *Free*, I come now (the last point I propose to consider) to the Barbarians *in bonds*.

By these I mean the vast multitudes stolen yearly from the opposite Continent, and sacrificed by the Colonists to their great Idol, the GOD OF GAIN. "But what then? (say these zealous Worshippers of Mammon) it is our own *Property* we offer up." What! Property in your Brethren, as in herds of Cattle? your Brethren both by Nature and Grace, Creatures endowed with all our Faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour? Does not this equally shock the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense? But, alas! what is there in the infinite abuses of Society which does not shock them!

In excuse of this violation of all things civil and sacred (for *Nature* created Man free, and *Grace* invites him to assert his freedom), it hath been pretended, That "though, indeed, these miserable Out-

casts of the Race of Adam be torn from their homes and native Wilds by force and fraud, yet this violation of the rights of humanity improves their condition and renders them less unhappy." But who are You, who pretend to judge of another man's *happiness?* that State, which each man, under the instinctive guidance of his Creator, forms for himself; and not one Man for another? To know what constitutes *mine* or *your* Happiness, is the sole prerogative of Him who made us, and cast us in so various and different Moulds. Did these your Slaves ever complain to you of their *unhappiness* amidst their native woods and desarts? or, rather, let me ask, did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you, their Lordly Masters? where they see, indeed, the accommodations of Civil life; but, the more to embitter their miseries, see them all pass by to others, themselves unbenefited by them. Be so gracious then, ye petty Tyrants over human freedom, to let your Slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes *their own happiness.* And then see whether they do not rather place it in the *Return* to their own Country, than in the contemplation of your Grandeur, of which, their distresses make so large a part. A *Return* so passionately longed for, that, despairing of *happiness* amidst the Chains of their cruel taskmasters, they console themselves in the fancy that their *future state* will be a return to their own country; where the equal Lord of all things will recompense their sufferings here. And I do not find, their haughty Masters have yet concerned themselves to invade this

this last refuge of the miserable. The less hardy of them indeed wait for this consolation till overwearied Nature sets them free; but more resolved tempers have recourse even to self-violence, to force a speedier passage.

But it may be still urged, "that although what is called *human happiness* be of so fantastic a nature, that each man creates it for himself, yet *human misery* is more substantial and uniform throughout all the tribes of Men. Now, from the worst of real miseries, the savage Africans (say their more savage Masters) are entirely secured by these forced emigrations; such as the being perpetually hunted down, like beasts of prey or profit, by their more fierce and powerful Neighbours."—In truth, a blessed change! from the being hunted to the being caught. But who are they that have set on foot this general HUNTING? Are they not these very civilized violators of humanity, themselves? who tempt the weak appetites, and provoke the wild passions of the fiercer Savages to prey upon the rest. However, in favour of an *established enormity*, it is fit that all that can be urged should be enforced. Something, I own, indeed not much, may be said in favour of this traffic. The TRADING IN MEN was the staple Commodity of the most early times: for, as the Poet observes,

Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,
A mighty Hunter, and his prey was MAN.

But, to bring this nice consideration home to ourselves. We of this Corporation, by the ceaseless change

change of Property, are become the innocent partakers of the fruits of so iniquitous a traffic; a very worthy benefactor having bequeathed unto us in trust, for the Propagation of the Gospel, A PLANTATION STOCKED WITH SLAVES. An odd Legacy to the promulgators of the *Law of Liberty!* But intended, perhaps, as a kind of compensation for these violations of it. And, if so, I am certain it will fully answer the pious intention of the Donor. God, out of this *Evil* (according to the gracious way of his Providence) having made us the honoured Instruments of producing *Good.*

The *cruelty* of certain PLANTERS, with respect to the temporal accommodations of these poor wretches, and the *irreligious negligence* of others with regard to their spiritual, is become a general Scandal.

Now this singular Donation will enable us to redress both the inhumanity and impiety of this conduct within the limits of our own Property. But this is the least part of the advantages we shall reap from it. What is of infinite more importance is the EXAMPLE we shall be enabled to hold out to the Colonies at large; an Example to invite or shame all tyrannous Masters into a more compassionate treatment of their fellow-creatures by Nature and their Brethren by Grace.

It would be impiety to suspect that the Society will not persevere in making this use of so fortunate a circumstance; since their duty more particularly exacts it, and their means of all kinds enable them to do it with effect.

To

To conclude, From what hath been said may be seen how faithfully this incorporated Society have laboured to discharge their Trust.

I have ventured to hint at what appears to me the *best means* of perfecting the Work, by setting before you (though far unable to do it to advantage) the new encouragements we have to *Prophesy* AGAIN *before many Peoples, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings.*

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the printing this, a pamphlet has been published, intitled, *A brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School in Connecticut, New-England*; in which is *a Letter from the Indians of Onohoquage* to the Directors of this Charity; curious enough, on many accounts, to be here transcribed.

Lake Utsage, July 31, 1765.

BRETHREN,

WE were informed by our Messenger that we sent to you last Spring *(Gwedelhes,* or *Peter Agwirondongwas)*, that you would not only assist us by sending us Ministers to teach us Christianity, but also that you would assist us in setting up Husbandry, by sending a Number of white People to live with us; who, when come, should build us Mills, teach us Husbandry, and furnish us with Tools for Husbandry, *&c.*

We

We greatly rejoiced at hearing of it, and expected them this Spring, but are disappointed ; at which we are very sorry : But we hope that we may yet receive them, and should much rejoice in it, should you send them to us.

We would have you understand, Brethren, that we have no Thoughts of selling our Land to any that come to live among us. For if we should sell a little Land to any, by and by they would want to buy a little more, and so our Land would go by Inches, till we should have none to live upon.—Yet as those that come to instruct us must live, we have no Objections against their improving as much Land as they please ; yet the Land shall remain ours.

We have, Brethren, never petitioned to you yet for any to assist us, but only those that come with GOD's *News* (*i. e.* the Gospel) ; yet, as you have offered to assist us likewise in teaching us Husbandry, we greatly rejoice in it, AND THINK THAT THEY SHOULD GO TOGETHER, the one as well as the other, and that we want Instruction in both. Brethren, we send our kindest Love to you, and remain your Brethren.

Isaac Dakayenensere.
Adam Waoonwanoron.

SERMON XXI.

ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

PROV. xxvi. ver. 4, 5.

ANSWER NOT A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST THOU ALSO BE LIKE UNTO HIM. ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

THE *contempt* of Religion soon followed the *abuse* of it: and the abuse of this sacred Institution is almost coeval with the thing itself: for that corruption of heart, whose disorder Religion was ordained to cure, hath been ever struggling against its remedy.

I. In the days of Solomon, when *Wisdom* was at its height, *Folly*, as we learn from many passages of that regal Sage, kept equal paces with it. Hence it was, that, after exhibiting many lively paintings of the irreligious Scorner, he subjoined directions to the generous Advocate of Piety and Virtue, how best to repress their insolence and vanity. ANSWER NOT *a Fool* (says he) *according to his folly, lest thou*

thou also be like unto him. ANSWER *a Fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

Short isolated sentences were the mode in which ancient Wisdom delighted to convey its precepts, for the regulation of life and manners. But when this natural mode of instruction had lost the grace of novelty, and a studied refinement had new coloured the candid simplicity of ancient converse, these instructive Sages found it necessary to give their moral maxims the seasoning and poignancy of *Paradoxes.* In these lively and not useless sports of fancy, the Son of David, we are told, greatly excelled. We find them to abound in the writings which bear his name: and we meet with frequent allusions to them, in all the parts of Sacred Writ, under the names of *Riddles, Parables,* and *Dark-sayings.*

Now of all the examples of this species of instruction, there is none fuller of moral wisdom than this *Paradox* of my Text, or which in the happiness of the expression hath so artfully conveyed the Key for opening the treasures of it. But as a *dark* conceit and a *dull* one have a great proximity in modern Wit; and a nice *difference* is not distinguished from a *contradiction* in modern reasoning; this Paradox of the Sage hath been mistaken by his Critics for an *absurdity* of some of his Transcribers, who forgot the negative in the latter member of the sentence; and so is to be set right: and at an easier expense, than unfolding *dark sentences of old,* namely, exchanging them for clearer, of a modern texture; which TIME may make *ancient readings*; and which a careful

a careful collation of its blunders may hereafter make the *true* *.

II. But they who choose to receive Scripture in its antique Garb, will perhaps venture with me, to try

* So again, Prov. xviii. 22. *Whoso findeth a Wife* (says the Wise man) *findeth a good thing*; *and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* But so bold an assertion hath revolted the more experienced Critics. They *presume* that Solomon expressed himself according to those venerable MSS. which read—*Whoso findeth* A GOOD WIFE *findeth* A GOOD THING; *and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* And this out of regard to the truth of things. But Solomon sure was never sent into the world to make this discovery. It was a fitter exploit for the *old Hermit of Prague*, the Poet speaks of, who although he *never saw pen and ink*, yet by mere dint of penetration discovered, that *whatever is, is.* And had these Critics reflected (which would have required but little more reach of thought) that the Wise man was here only characterizing *the divine Ordinance of Marriage* itself, as instituted by God in Paradise, on this great Principle—*that it was not* GOOD *for man to be alone*, their doubts concerning the integrity of the text had been easily relieved: Solomon's assertion being simply this, "That whoever endeavours to "conform himself to the order of Providence, in sup- "porting this Institution, endeavours to obtain *a good* "*thing*." It is not the *Woman*, whether good or bad, that hath here this appellation: but the *Wife* figuratively, too, employed for the holy Institution of Marriage itself. And to this sense the concluding words might have led them—*and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* For why doth he who *findeth a wife*, obtain God's favour? Surely because he hath complied with, and promoted, the Ordinance

try whether the seeming contradiction in the common text cannot be fairly unriddled without any other aid than of the words themselves in which the *dark saying* is conveyed.

Had the *Folly* of these Fools been only of one condition or denomination, the advice *to answer*, and *not to answer*, had indeed been repugnant to itself; but as the *folly*, by the Wise Man's own account of it, is seen to have been of different kinds, in some of which, *to answer* might offend the dignity of Truth; and, in others, *not to answer* might hurt its interests; *To answer*, and *not to answer*, is a consistent, and may, for aught these Critics know, be a very wise direction.

Had the advice been given simply and without circumstance, *to answer the Fool, and not to answer him*, a Critic who held the Sacred Text in reverence, would satisfy himself in supposing, that the different directions referred to the doing a thing in and out of season. But when, to the general advice about *answering*, this circumstance is added, *according to his folly*, that interpretation is excluded; and a difficulty indeed arises; a difficulty, which hath made those, who have no reverence for the text, accuse it of absurdity and contradiction.

But now, to each direction, reasons are subjoined, *why*

nance of God. The *Fool* indeed may say, *according to his folly*, that "it is here insinuated, a *good wife* is such a rarity that a successful search after her must be ascribed to the special favour of God." But if he does say so, he deserves *no answer*, were it only for supposing that Solomon was here trifling in the modern vein of trivial satire.

why a Fool should, and why he should not, be answered: reasons, which, when set together and compared, are, at first sight, sufficient to make the Critic suspect that all the contradiction lies in his own incumbered ideas.

1. The reason given *why a Fool should not be answered according to his folly*, is *lest he* [the Answerer] *be like unto him.*

2. The reason given *why the Fool should be answered according to his folly*, is *lest he* [the Fool] *be wise in his own conceit.*

The cause assigned of *not answering* therefore, forcibly insinuates that the Defender of Religion should not imitate the Insulter of it in his modes of disputation; which may be comprised in *sophistry*, *buffoonry*, and *scurrility*. For what could so much assimilate the Answerer to his Idiot-Adversary as the putting on his Fool's coat, in order to captivate and confound the Rabble?

The cause assigned of *answering*, plainly intimates, that the Sage should address himself to confute the Fool upon the Fool's own *Principles*, by shewing, that they lead to conclusions very wide from the impieties he would deduce from them. And if any thing can prevent the *Fool* from being *wise in his own conceit*, it must be the dishonour and the ridicule of having his own *Principles* turned against him; while they are shewn to make for the very contrary purpose to that for which he had employed them.

The high Wisdom conveyed in the two precepts

of this unravelled *Paradox* will be best understood by explaining the mischiefs avoided and the advantages arising from the observance of each of them.

III. We are *not to answer a fool according to his folly, lest we also be like unto him.*—This is the reason given; and a good one it is; sufficient to make any sober man decline a contest, where even Victory would bring dishonour with it. Now if our *answer* be of such a nature that we also (though with contrary intentions) do injury to Truth, we become *like unto him* in the essential part of his Character. And surely Truth is never more insulted, nor its Advocates more debased, than when they employ the *foolish* arts of *Sophistry*, *Buffoonry* and *Scurrility*, in its defence.

1. To use *fallacious* and inconclusive arguments in support of Truth, a trick that hath been too often practised, is doing it infinite discredit.

It tends to make men suspicious that the pretended Truth is falsehood, when it finds support in the common arts of Impostors. The most favourable, and perhaps fairest inference which will be made is, that the Truth is defended, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Defender. Hence we become less attentive to the issue, and more jealous of the good faith of the Reasoner. Hence our reverence for the Cause is lessened, and our prejudices against the Advocate increased. It tends to bring the two parties of *Wisdom* and *Folly* on a level, when they stand on the same unfaithful and fallacious ground.

ground. It tends to erase the distinction between *true* and *false*, and at length makes all terminate in that most inveterate species of *folly*, Pyrronic doubt and uncertainty.

2. To employ *Buffoonry* in this service is violating the Dignity of Truth, which can enforce its influence amongst men no longer than while the sanctity of its Character is kept safe from insult.

Buffoonry deprives Truth of the only thing she wants, in order to come off triumphant; I mean, a *fair hearing*. To examine, men must be serious: and to judge, they must be attentive to the argument. *Buffoonry* gives a levity to the mind, which makes it seek entertainment, where it should find only instruction. But let this poor bastard-talent be taken at its utmost value, the practice of it will still raise a suspicion that the Advocate of Religion hath his Cause little at heart, while, in the very heat of this important Controversy, he can allow himself to be amused and diverted by *buffoonry*, this spurious Counterfeit of Wit; since in matters which are understood to concern us most, we are wont to appear, as well as to be, most in earnest: And this scandal given by the Advocate will always bring prejudice on the Cause.

3. Again, PERSONAL ABUSE, that favourite *colour* which strikes most in the Fool's, as well as in the Knave's, Rhetoric, is carefully to be avoided. For nothing can make the *Answerer* so much resemble the *Fool* he is confuting, as a want of Candour and Charity; which this mode of *answering* so openly

betrays. Whatever pretence the *Fool* makes to Candour—to Charity he makes none. His very attempt is an avowed violation of it. He would deprive the World of what he himself confesses to be most useful to Society; and most pleasing to the natural sentiments of man; I mean *Religion*. He would break down this Barrier against Vice; and rob us of this best consolation against the evils of human life. And in such a service he follows but his nature and his office, when he vilifies and calumniates all who set themselves to oppose his impious attempts.

One might wonder that the Wise man, who gives this caution to the *Friends* of Religion, could suppose that they should stand in need of it. But he well knew of what stuff we are all made;—that the irregular passions frequently operate alike, whether in pursuit of truth or falsehood; and that the arms fabricated and naturally employed in defence of error, are unnaturally taken up, to skirmish in a better cause.

For as all men strive to be on the laughing side, so all affect Wit to support themselves in it. Now *Wit* being the portion but of one in a million, every pretender to Wit mistakes *Buffoonry* for it, or hopes at least that his Reader will mistake it.

A well-urged argument is, perhaps, as rare an effort as a well-turned piece of wit, and makes an Adversary, against whom it is pointed, as much out of humour. So that such a one will be apt to supply his want of sense with his abundance of *scurrility*; which is the same succedaneum to good Argument

Argument that *Buffoonry* is to true Wit; and will serve the user, who appeals to the taste of a prejudiced Cabal, full as well.

These are the various modes of *answering* which are to be avoided, lest the Advocate of Religion become *like* the vain Caviller, whom he addresses himself to confute.

But, under the reason here given for *not answering*, there is another insinuated—We are not to answer the Fool, lest we should be like to him in *Character*. This is the reason given. The reason insinuated is—lest we should be like to him in *the issue of his Inquiries*. What that is, Solomon tells us in this same Book of Proverbs—THE SCORNER SEEKETH WISDOM AND FINDETH IT NOT*. For *Scorner* is the name here given to the *Fool*, with reference to his arts of controversy, carried on by sophistry, buffoonry, and scurrility, anatomized above: all of them the marks of *scorn* and insolence. Now if this be true, that the *Scorner's search after wisdom* is vain and fruitless, we have here another reason why we should not imitate his practice; or, in other words, why we should *not answer the Fool according to his folly*.

That no other issue of his *search* is to be expected, I shall now shew you.

The *Fool*, turned *Scorner*, places the perfection of Wisdom rather in laughing at what is wrong than in pursuing what is right: and, of all the *seekers* after Truth, is, both by his disposition and his method of inquiry, least likely to find it.

* Chap. xiv. 6.

1. PRIDE and VANITY are the foundation of the *Scorner*'s Character; they consist in a presumptuous conceit of superior knowledge; *Pride* disposes him to receive homage from himself; *Vanity*, to demand it from others. But, of all the Passions, these most effectually keep hid from us that imbecility and incurable ignorance of our Nature, which, in our search after truth, ought always to be present to us, both to excite our industry, and to awaken our caution. For without industry we can make but small advances; and without caution we shall be perpetually deviating from the right track.

As the *Scorner*'s opinion of his own abilities is so ill founded, his *Vanity* will always be seeking homage from others, for those excellencies which his *Pride* has created in himself: to gratify which, is the only thing he aims at in the display of his self-imputed wit. And though *true wit* and *true wisdom* were meant for each other's aid, yet this spurious *Conceit*, which the Scorner so much cultivates and indulges, serving only to raise ill-timed mirth, or to gratify the malignity of his depraved temper, drives *Wisdom* from so polluted a quarter.

This species of *Vanity* brings on a levity of mind; which, in its first stages, corrupts the Judgment in our estimate of the importance of Truth: and, as it grows habitual, occasions a total indifference to its interests. Indeed, nothing so enervates and effeminates the Reason as the immoderate indulgence of *Ridicule*; for as the Wise man observes, in another place of this book—*the end of this mirth is heaviness*: that is, it sets in DULNESS.

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Now, this indifference to Truth and Falsehood shews itself, first of all, in a malignant pleasure the *Scorner* takes in embarrassing and perplexing every subject he pretends to handle and examine. Nor is this the worst. His indifference concludes, at length, in a total *Scepticism*. For when once a man can bring himself to be indifferent to Objects so important as those of good and evil, the labour required in discriminating their natures will so offend his easy delicacy, that he will gladly take refuge in a set of Principles which shorten his search, and persuade him that the inquiry is in vain; that truth and falsehood, are Chimeras; or that if they have a real existence, yet, the light in which they are objected to our contemplation is so obscure, and the human Intellect so dull by Nature and so narrowed by Institution, that we perpetually mistake them for one another, in the indistinct and cloudy light in which they are presented to us.

2. The *Scorner*'s method of inquiry is another cause of his *never finding Wisdom*. He begins with detecting and exposing Error. And, indeed, Inquirers of more sobriety often find it necessary to do the same; because these errors often lie in their way; obstruct their search, and retard their progress. But then, this *method* leading the Detector into a large field for the display of his pleasantry; and for the exercise of his wit, if he has any; the *Scorner* grows so enamoured of *Buffoonry*, that here he stays, and spends all his time in this trifling amusement, when his business was only to stop till he had cleared the

road, that he might proceed with fresh vigour in his search. So that this, which, at best, is but the first step to Wisdom, the *Scorner* makes the last.

But it is not only the pleasure he takes in laughing at folly and error, but his aversion for those regions of severe Truth where *Wisdom* resides, which keeps him so self-satisfied in these jovial vanities.

Besides, were he never so much disposed to push on his search to the very Throne of *Wisdom*, his Talents, and the habitual use to which he puts them, would render his inquiry fruitless and ineffectual. To see and to expose the ABUSE OF THINGS, by which scorn is ingendered, requires little more than a quick sense of what is wrong, and a lively imagination to expose it: but, to penetrate to their REAL NATURE, demands strength and application of mind, rarely found, where the exercise of a lively fancy hath been long indulged. True *Wisdom* consisting in the knowledge of the *use* of things, just as idle wit subsists in laughing at their *abuses*.

Thus we see, why the *Scorner* affects to *seek Wisdom*; and how it happens that he never finds it.

All which considered, the wise man advises us, *not to answer a fool according to his folly, lest we also be like unto him.*

IV. But then, *lest the Fool should be wise in his own conceit*, we are, at the same time, bid *to give him an Answer*. Now, how this can be done in the manner here directed, namely, *according to his folly*, and yet, the *Answerer* not become *like unto him*, but, on the contrary, able thereby, to produce the effect

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here intimated (viz. the cure of the *Fool*'s vain *conceit* of his superior Wisdom), is a difficulty indeed; a difficulty worthy the Advocate of Truth to undertake.

And, a Master of his Subject may hope to overcome this difficulty by contriving to confute the *Fool* on his own *Principles*, by shewing that they lead to a Conclusion very destructive of those free consequences he has laboured to deduce from them.

To give an instance or two. A capital objection to what we call REVELATION, is the innumerable pretensions to it by Impostors in all ages: Every Founder of the National Religion assuming a divine Mission, supported by Prodigies and Wonders. Yet this favourite *Principle* of Infidelity may be fairly turned upon the Objectors themselves.

1. For first, the abundance of these pretended Revelations strongly evinces the need which men were conscious they had of the extraordinary direction of Heaven, to aid the feeble glimmering of natural light, and to support those capital and general Truths which are so obscurely and imperfectly discovered by it. For the craft of one of these Impostors is always directed to take advantage of the common turn of the People. He is too well acquainted with human nature to think of giving it a new bias. His skill consists in applying what he finds most prevailing in it, to the aid of his Politics.

2. Secondly, True Revelation is essentially distinguished from all the Species of the false, by this circumstance, that the false have all of them *subordinate*

dinate Deities for the object of their Worship; and consequently all have the complaisance to acknowledge the truth of one another's pretensions. Whereas true Revelation claiming its origin from the first Cause of all things, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, condemns, by necessary consequence, all the national Religions of Paganism, as Impostures.

2. Another instance—and then enough will be said to explain my meaning on this head. The Christian Dispensation is accused of falsehood for its abounding in MYSTERIES. These *Fools* suppose, that "if God hath indeed revealed himself to Mankind, every thing contained in his Dispensation must be plain and evident."—But, in this judgment, they seem only to provide for their own infirmities, without any regard to the honour of their Maker. They forget that, though the Receivers be Men, yet the Giver is the Lord. And that, therefore, though the fundamental Doctrines of such a Dispensation should be adapted to the weakness and narrowness of the human Capacity, yet the Creator and Governor of all things should mark the Religion *for his own*, by such sublime traits, which, at the time that they express the shining features of the Divinity, humble the vain arrogance of human Reason; the perfect comprehension of these transcendent Truths, not essential to the profession of our Faith here, being reserved for our reward hereafter.

Nor is this *Principle* or Objection of Solomon's Fool less subject to retortion than the other.

To the pretended Friend of Natural Religion, the Believing *Answerer* would say, "You fly with affright

affright from Revelation at the sight of its *Mysteries*, yet these *Mysteries* meet you again in Natural Religion, in which you have taken refuge. For *Freewill* reconciled to *Prescience* is as inexplicable a Mystery as any our holy Religion holds out to us, to exercise the submission of our Reason, and keep it in due subordination to Faith. And the force of it holds as strongly against you, as any Gospel Mystery against a Believer: since if you be, indeed, a friend or Follower of Natural Religion, you must confess, that man is *free*, since without freedom he could not be accountable; you must confess that God *foresees*, since without the prescience of the actions of free-agents he could not be omniscient.

As for the *Fool* who hides his Atheistic Naturalism under the cover of Natural Religion, the Believer easily retorts his objection to Mysteries, from the State of the Material World, where only, the *Fool* seeks, and expects to find, real Knowledge. Yet he must confess all that concerns MATTER to be an explicable Mystery. I pass its creation out of nothing; because I am in doubt whether the *Naturalist* holds or rejects this Truth, and will only urge him with its divisibility, its expansion and contraction, its inert force, and all those incomprehensible qualities which the Newtonian Philosophy hath revealed.

With the same force as in these two instances, may all the *Fool*'s Principles be returned upon him. And sure if any thing can dissipate the vain vision of being *wise in his own conceit*, it must be the sense of such a dishonour. For what can be more humiliating

miliating than to have his own Principles shewn to be destructive of his Conclusions? What more mortifying than to have those Principles, in whose invention he so much gloried, or in whose use he so much confided, fairly turned, by the unerring rules of good Logic, to the credit of the Religion he was attempting to overthrow? Nor is the Partisan of Falsehood more humbled than the Cause of Truth is advanced by *thus* answering a Fool *according to his Folly:* For that victory, where our Opposite is made to contribute to his own overthrow, is always held, in common estimation, to be most complete: That System being reasonably judged despicable, whose most plausible support draws after it the ruin of what it was raised to uphold.

On the whole, It is thus (as the Wise man directs) that this forward *Fool* is to be treated; whether it be by SILENCE or CONFUTATION.

V. That his *Folly* is to be repressed *according to the dictates of true Wisdom*, the nature of the thing sufficiently instructs us. There was no need of a particular direction to enforce the expediency and necessity of such a conduct.

But then, it sometimes happens that the interests of Truth may require that he should be *answered* even *according to his folly:* And, as in discharge of our duty *here* the execution is very liable to abuse, it was fit and proper to obviate the danger. This, we may observe, the Sacred Writer hath done; and with much art, and elegance of address.

It may indeed be said, "Why this practised obliquity

liquity in defence of Truth? Is not the purity of her nature rather defiled, than her real interests advanced, by this indirection? And doth not *Wisdom* seem to say, that it best suits her dignity to repress *Folly* by those Arms only which *Wisdom* herself hath fabricated and tempered: that Truth, by the information of her own light, points out the straight road to her abode; and forbids us to wriggle into her presence through blind by-paths, and the cloudy medium of falsehood?"

But they who talk thus magnificently, do not sufficiently reflect on the condition of our weak-sighted nature, which can ill bear the bright and unshaded light of Truth: Nor do they seem to see the beauty of that contrivance in the Order of things, whereby *Folly*, by thus administering to her own defeat, is made to bring us back again into the ways of *Wisdom*, from which she had seduced and misled us.

The REDEEMER of the world, in condescension to the infirmities of those whom he came to save, hath taken this very advantage which this established order of things afforded him. For, more effectually to silence those *Fools* who rose up against him, he answered them *according to their folly*; that is, he demonstrated to them the truth and reasonableness of the Gospel on their own ideas, of the nature and end of the LAW; ideas formed on Rabbinical Traditions, and the reveries of Greek Philosophers; and urged by them in discredit of his Mission and his Office. The pure and unabated splendor of Truth, ushered in, in all the solemn

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State of Wisdom, would have only increased their judicial blindness. To bear this effusion of light undazzled, they had need of the instant aid of that SPIRIT OF TRUTH which was not yet come, but only promised to be sent.

Indeed, when this sacred Guide, who was to *lead men into all truth*, came down from above, and while he continued, in an extraordinary manner, to enlighten the Understandings of the Faithful, there was no occasion for this enforced Ministry of *Folly* to contribute to her own overthrow: And therefore, the first Ministers of the Gospel proceeded to the Establishment of Truth in a direct line, and on the solid principles of *Wisdom* only. Yet now again, in the *ordinary* effusions of the Holy Spirit, this direction of Solomon will be as useful as ever to the interests of Virtue and Religion—ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY, LEST HE BE WISE IN HIS OWN CONCEIT.

SERMON XXII.

Preached before the King, in Lent, 1761.

PROVERBS, Chap. xiv. ver. 9.

FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN.

THIS strange impiety, the Wise man fairly marks as the utmost excess of *Folly:* For, having just before told us, that *Fools despise wisdom,* and that they *hate knowledge,* he completes their character, by observing, that they *make a mock at Sin.*

By the term *fool,* in common life, we understand one whom the powers of *Reason have forsaken*; but Religion gives it to that still more unhappy Being, who *forsakes Reason*; to that miserable Man who, rejecting the Guide which God and Nature have appointed for his direction, suffers himself to be misled by various Impostors, who have ridiculously usurped her name and office.

The Young are generally borne away by the *Passions and Affections*; the Old are mostly drawn aside by *Habit and Custom*; and all ages, both Young and Old, groan under the slavery of FASHION; which yet,

yet, with all its airs of superior importance, at last resolves itself into a servile compliance with the caprices of others.

The *Passions and Affections* make the fiercest attack upon human Virtue; but Reason being then upon its guard, in its full vigour, and unimpaired by those prejudices, which a long commerce with the World hath made us to contract, if men yield to the sudden violence of the Appetites, they have suffered themselves to be betrayed by indolence, cowardice, a false selfishness, or from some cause which true Wisdom disavows and condemns.

As the Passions overpower and trample upon Reason; so *Habit*, by gentle and insensible degrees, throws it into a kind of Lethargy, which makes it insensible of right and wrong. But whenever it does so, it is by our own fault, a shameful neglect in not calling upon Reason to try and examine our *habits*, by the test she offers; which would presently shew us, what is permitted, and what is to be condemned.

The last and most impudent Impostor of all, is what men call Fashion, which imperiously enjoins submission to the Fancies of others. And this Dominion over *fools* is far more extensive than the other two. *Our love of pleasure* makes us confederate with the Passions, against Reason; our *love of ease* inclines us to fall in with habit against Reason; but it is *Vanity* alone which draws us to follow the Fashion, against her: And Vanity having a more general, as well as more lasting sway, over the human heart, than either appetite or custom, it follows, that more are misled by the *fashion*, which Others give us, than either by the

the *passions*, which Nature gave us, or by the *habits*, which we give ourselves.

Let us see then the sentiments of each of these slaves of *folly*, with regard to this mortal enemy of our Nature, SIN.

1. The man who is borne away from reason and virtue by the violence of his *Appetites*, has often, during that tempestuous Season, a true sense of his condition; and is ready to confess or to complain, in the words of St. Paul—*The good, which I would, that I do not*; *but the evil, which I would not, that I do*. Such a one will be so far from *mocking*, or being disposed to make himself merry with the idea of *Sin*, that he will look on *it* with horror, from the mischiefs which he sees it ready to produce; and on *himself* with resentment and contempt, for the baseness of his subjection to it: So that, while this unequal struggle continues between his Passions and his Reason, he will have very little disposition to preposterous mirth.

2. But when once the criminal gratification of his passions is grown into a *Habit*, the abhorrence of sin is at an end. He looks upon it, in its daily temptations, with the same unconcern that he receives the services of a deformed Domestic; who, at first perhaps, was never seen without dislike or horror, which a familiar converse has long since worn out.—But still, mere *use* and *habit* will never carry the pliant perversity of our Nature much further: It will never bring us to make a *jest* of our Misery, or to try if we can *laugh* Sin out of its nature; and,

while its dreadful effects still object themselves to our senses and experience, to *ridicule* it as an empty Phantom, conjured up between the Nurse and the Priest.

3. No. To arrive at this perfection in *Folly*, we must have made the *opinion of other men* the standard of our manners; or, in plainer words, we must have become the Fools of Fashion.

Now, in the polite World, Vice is entertained very differently from the reception it finds amongst Little People: who sin, and are ashamed, and so turn Hypocrites to men; who sin, and are absolved, and so turn Hypocrites to God: While the part of the Man of Fashion is *to sin bravely:* to regard the natural bashfulness attending the breach of God's commandments, as the ill-bred shame of the Rustic; and repentance, as a kind of poltronery, in which his honour and reputation suffer. So that whenever a serious remonstrance is made to one of these, of the iniquity of his ways, this *Fool of Fashion makes a mock at Sin*, as deriving its fanciful existence from nothing but the sly contrivances of our Civil and our Spiritual Governors.

But as, in the numerous tribe of polite Vices, there are still some higher in *the fashion* than others, and therefore capable of a livelier defence, and deserving of a stronger ridicule on the Reprover; a cursory view of them will be sufficient to shew in which quarter the folly lies; whether under the mask of *formal wisdom*, where these Gentlemen direct us to seek it, or in the barefaced pleasantry of their own darling *ridicule*.

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The violation of God's holy name by profane swearing; the abuse of his blessings by a beastly intemperance; and the pollution of his sacred *Image* (in which we were created) by vague Lust; are the three Sins, which the polite world are most disposed to make a *mock* of.

Yet if we be to judge of them by their causes and effects (on which Reason teaches us to estimate moral matters) we must conclude that nothing can be more offensive to God, more abusive of our own Nature, or more injurious to our fellow-creatures.

God hath vouchsafed unto us the use of his Sacred Name, to convey our praises and supplications to the Throne of Grace; and, on solemn and public occasions, to add a sanction to Truth and Right.—But, in the horrid practice of profane swearing, men employ this ever-sacred Name for the garniture of their vanity; to give importance to their pride; or to add terror to their brutal passions, their rage, their hate, or their revenge. They call upon God to witness, and, in effect, dare him to punish, all their silly, lewd, and lying conversation; all that their self-importance, their interest, or their malice, can provoke them to invent, and then, to impose upon their companions. Can we now conceive a greater insult on the violated majesty of Heaven than this diabolic intemperance of speech? surely none, unless it be to hear these Sons of perdition *mock* and ridicule the Reprover of their blasphemies.

Luxury or *Intemperance* is another of these

fashionable vices, which the Polite rather make the matter of their reputation than their shame. It consists in turning the blessings of Providence to abuse; and the sustentation of nature to its destruction; whereby our very eating and drinking become criminal. But *fashion* sways throughout. The intemperance of our Fathers went one way; the intemperance of their Sons goes another. But it is of small moment which of these brutalities, whether gluttony or the bottle, deprives us of our reason and our health. Either of them is sure to do it; for the certain issue of both is a legion of follies, and an hospital of diseases. Yet so small account does the polite Debauché make of these two noblest gifts of God and Nature, TRUTH and HEALTH, that he is ready to throw them both away for the vain and frivolous reputation of a well-spread Table, or a social Cup: For, *Truth*, the greatest of intellectual goods, is the produce of undisturbed reason; and *Health*, the greatest of the corporeal, is the blooming fruit of temperance: and yet, we can be content to be deprived of both, for the sordid pleasure of a riotous, unmeaning jollity. And, when Religion calls *that* a Sin, which we miscall urbanity and social life, we are ready to *mock* at the *Gospel-morals*, as an institution unpolite and rustic, and a foe to the elegancies of life.

The fashionable Man as loudly proclaims his folly, when he treats the reproof of *Incontinence or vague Lust* with levity and contempt. This Sin, whether it be the robbery of innocence, or the keeping the miserable object of his Luxury enslaved to

to impurity and vice, is (amongst other mischiefs) the most atrocious injury to our fellow-creatures.

The dearest treasure of life is Innocence. With this, all the benefits of Fortune receive a double lustre; and with this, we are enabled to bear the worst of her disgraces: for innocence softens the rigours of the seasons; relieves the distresses of poverty; and makes even languor smile upon the bed of sickness. How cruel, then, is that Spoiler who robs the weak and easily-deluded virgin of this greatest blessing and ornament of life. It is a cruelty that sums up all the injuries he can do his neighbour in one. It violates the person; it blasts the reputation; and brings on inevitable distress and penury.

But this Sin rarely stops at the mere destruction of Innocence: it generally completes its progress, by keeping the unhappy victim of its Luxury chained down to vice and misery, in a continued state of prostitution; preventing, by the basest contrivances, Religion, Reputation, and even common Prudence, from having any force to draw them back again, from their ruinous condition, into the paths of virtue and repentance. Yet this is the Sin which the Fool makes his pastime; the subject of his *mockery*; nay even of his boast and triumph.

But the most insolent species of these *profane Mockers* is still behind. For there are of these, who, not content to *mock* in the common mode of *folly*, love to heighten their buffoonery by the mask of philosophic gravity; and, in the wantonness of change, feel their idle humour best gratified, when

they act the voluptuousness of Clodius under the stoical countenance of Cato.

In this temper, they shove the Teacher from his Chair; and tell us that musty Moralists mistake their office; that the blessings of Providence were given us to use, and not to cast away; that they were given us to enjoy, and not to quarrel with; that the *measure* of their use should be regulated by the APPETITES; as the appetites only have the art of making that use an enjoyment: And, for Pedant REASON to assume the office of judging between *good* and *evil*, because it is intrusted to decide between *right* and *wrong*, is as if the Taste should pretend to judge between straight and crooked, because it can distinguish between sweet and bitter. Each Faculty (say they) hath its several department; and with that, all, but *Reason*, are content. This Usurper interferes in every circumstance, and claims the whole government of civil life. Hence the rights of Nature are no less violated in the use of *Persons* than of *Things*, by this assuming Judge and Director; who, in confederacy with her spurious issue, LAW, hath contrived to make more than *mutual consent* necessary for the possession of the first and general blessing bestowed on man in Paradise. Where neither the Parent *Reason*, nor her stern Progeny, *the Laws*, will commiserate discordancy of temper, or distress of circumstances; but, with relentless rigour, combine to fasten that fatal yoke, which these victims of their cruel policy must submit to wear, till as merciless a Deliverer sets them free. Again (say they) how absurd is it for *Reason* to control the Appetites at all, even in the general

general pursuit of pleasure? PLEASURE their peculiar object, their native department; for which, all their functions are so properly contrived, and for which all their sensations are so admirably fitted. *Reason* has no feelings, and therefore should have no jurisdiction in the measure of the enjoyment.

This is the language of the more refined *Mockers*, tricked up in the prostituted garb of Science.

One might *answer these fools according to their folly*; one might tell them (though to tell them would only make them *mock* the more) "That this envied Station of imperial *Reason* is no usurpation: that this authority was given her, to secure Humanity in its native dignity: that the *Appetites* mistake their use; they were not given to regulate the enjoyment of good, but to excite us in the pursuit of it: for, one species of good tending to the preservation of the Individual, and another, to the continuance of the Kind, were we not sensually swayed, as well as rationally directed, Inclination would be frequently too slow to answer the temperate calls of nature: therefore has all-wise Providence implanted in its heedless creature, Man, this instinctive impulse of the sensual Appetites. Within these limits they may fairly act; but should go no further. They have the office of *Monitor*, but not of *Judge*. This last requires a discernment which blind Appetite hath not; who knows no mean nor measure; can form no ideas of the present, from the past or future; a provisionary faculty necessary to prevent the abuse of good, and its conversion into evil: And this being in the district of *Reason* only, it follows, that she, and she

alone, was placed by the Author of Nature as a Curb and Guide to impotent and blind *Instinct*. And in our *use of good*, should Reason be silent till the Appetites call to take away, abstinence would then come too late; for *sensuality* demands much more than the body can dispose of, or properly distribute, for the functions of life and health. Nor is it at all strange, when the Appetites prove thus headstrong, that *Reason* should call in *Law* to her assistance; not the Confederate of her usurpation, but the rightful Associate of her Office, to support her just authority, and to correct what she alone was unable to restrain. And if, in so important a circumstance as connubial relation, they have made the tye thus strong, it was done with the highest moral fitness, as it best tended to promote and to improve the benefits of domestic and civil life. Discordancy of temper would never try to reform its own perversities, while so licentious a relief was still at hand.—And what stronger spur to industry, in the distresses of fortune, than the various Charities of conjugal relation? which, when impaired and weakened, by an easy separation, carry away with them all that manly virtue by which both States and private Houses are supported.

As to *pleasure in general*, the only idea which the Appetites can form of it, are the different degrees, with which the several kinds strike upon the Senses. But admitting the Appetites could go further, and comprehend both its nature and effects, yet still the bribery of those pleasing sensations would so much bias the inclination as to corrupt all integrity of

judgment. Now, in the indulgence of *pleasure*, many nice and distant respects are to be taken in; which no faculty but *Reason* can investigate and collect; or when collected, can set together and compare, in order to assign to each its just weight and moment. What faculty but *Reason* can discern the various effects, which the use of pleasure hath upon the mind and body; or the consequences of it to those with whom we stand related by domestic, civil, or religious connexions? Whether, according to this or that degree of it, it doth not enervate the body, obstruct the agency of the mind, impoverish our Families, debauch the Public, or violate the duties of Religion? All these are necessary considerations; for on these, HAPPINESS, that is *real pleasure*, essentially depends. Now reason only being capable of forming a true judgment in these matters, we conclude, that she, and not the Appetites, is the proper Director in the pursuit of Pleasure.

Thus have I here adventured to expose the egregious folly, and to unmask the extreme corruption of heart, which can assume the Buffoon or the Philosopher indifferently, to laugh at misery and death, and make a mockery both of Law and Religion. For the *Sins*, which the fashionable Person commits with so much ease, and confesses with so much gaiety, the Laws both of God and man have been careful to forbid, and vigilant to punish; as actions destructive of our present, as well as future happiness. How both may resent it, these impious Triflers would do well to consider. For there is so much seditious insolence

insolence with respect to the Civil Magistrate, *in making a mock at Sin*, that he will probably think the fittest place for them is Bedlam; and so much impiety towards God, that if the place reserved for reprobate Spirits will admit of any other Guests, they must needs be such as those who most resemble them in their Conditions, such as make a jest of Sin and Misery, and a mockery both of God and Man.

SERMON XXIII.

Preached before the King, in Lent, 1765.

1 Cor. ix. 24.

KNOW YE NOT THAT THEY WHICH RUN IN A RACE RUN ALL, BUT ONE RECEIVETH THE PRIZE? SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.

THE Apostle, proposing to shew to his Converts of *Corinth* the advantages which they, who contend for a heavenly prize, have over those who aspire no higher than an earthly one, illustrates his Argument by a similitude taken from their so celebrated *Olympic Games*; which contains a reasoning to this effect—

"Worldly attainments (says he) are like the Contentions in your *Olympic Games*; where, though the Athletes be many, and the struggle great, yet the prizes are extremely few, and the Success very uncertain; for that every Adventurer hath an Adversary in every other; who all strive to cross, to retard, to circumvent him in his Course. On the contrary, they, who aspire to that immortal crown, which *Religion* holds out, as the reward of Faith and Charity,

Charity, are all sure to win, and be victorious; the rewards being many, as coming from the all-bounteous hand of our heavenly Father; and the assistance great, as afforded by the kind encouragement of our Christian Brethren running the same race with us. Therefore (says the Apostle) do you Corinthians put in for this Prize, which no accidents of time or fortune, nor any thing but your own fault, can hinder you from obtaining: and throw behind you all worldly ambition for that agonistic glory, where you have so small chance of coming off either with honour or advantage."

This the Apostle urges as *one* motive for preferring heavenly pursuits to earthly. In the words which follow my text, he enforces *another*—*And every man* (saith he) *who striveth for Mastery is* TEMPERATE in all things: *Now They do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but We, an incorruptible.*—*For this purpose*, adds he, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* As much as to say, "The pursuit of a heavenly Crown hath not only these advantages of *certainty* above that aspired to, at the Olympic Games, but they are without any peculiar drawback, since the preparation for the spiritual prize is not more severe than the preparation for the earthly." *If I* (says he) *a follower of Christ, keep under my body, and bring it into subjection*; the Olympic Racer observes as strict a Discipline—*he is temperate in all things.*

Such is the force of the Apostle's fine persuasive, to induce the followers of Christ, to prefer the pursuit of spiritual things to things temporal.

All,

All, therefore, I shall have to do, will be only to draw out and develop the reasoning of my text, in such a manner as to impress the force of it on the mind of every serious Hearer. Let us therefore attend to these two important Truths—

Ist, That Worldly advantages, when they come to be so considerable as to deserve the name of a *prize*, are of the most uncertain and difficult attainment. And,

IIndly, That the immense rewards, which Religion holds out to its faithful Servants, are within the reach of every one: where, every honest and sincere Aspirant to the *prize* is sure not to be disappointed: for, as in the Words following my text —the Christian Racer *runs not as uncertainly; he so fights, not as one that beateth the air.*

And here let me observe, that the Apostle turned the fairest side outwards, in this representation of worldly pursuits, when he compared them to the contentions in the *Olympic Games*: for in those Games superior Skill and Address bade fairest for the highest *prize*: but in the world at large the prospect is much less favourable.

Wisdom and Industry, the qualities designed both by Providence and by Nature, to procure, for the WORTHY, the fruits of their honest labours, are so crossed and traversed by what the Ignorant call *Chance*, in the disposition of human affairs, that Folly, and random Starts, often get to the goal before them, and snatch away the *prize* from them.

While Solomon, the wise, considered, but in speculation

culation only, the natural connexion there is between merit and success, he was ready to conclude, that the Rewards of Providence constantly attended the Efforts of Wisdom and Virtue: But when he turned his Contemplations outward, and observed what was doing amongst Men, he gave a very different account of these matters; *I returned* (that is, from speculation, and an ideal World), and *then I saw under the Sun* (that is, in practice and in the affairs of men) *that the race is not to the Swift, nor the battle to the Strong*; *nor yet bread to the Wise*; *nor yet riches to men of Understanding*; *nor yet favour to men of Skill: But time and chance happeneth to them all.*

However, let us take this matter at the best, and throw such untoward circumstances aside: Let us suppose, Wisdom and Industry to be as necessary and as successful, in affairs at large, as Diet and Exercise to an Olympic Racer; and then see, what the Man of the World is to struggle with; what opposition he is to encounter; and how many ways his fairest endeavours are likely to be defeated.

In private Stations, the deserving Candidate for the World's favour is eternally crossed by those two capital enemies of Merit, IGNORANCE and ENVY. It is hard to say, whose malignancy is most baleful. For if *Ignorance* be less active, its ill influence operates soonest. Rising merit requires early protection and support. *Ignorance* is the Winter of the moral World; which fixes the finer and gentler Spirits in a torpid inactivity; and either destroys, or greatly retards, the earliest and most vigorous

vigorous productions of the human mind. And those natures of a more hardy texture, which can struggle through its inclemencies, scarce ever attain to half their growth or maturity: While those, who, by a rare felicity in their early culture, escape the severity of this frost of Ignorance, no sooner begin to rise high in the view of men, than they are assaulted from the quarter opposite, from the Dog-star rage of *Envy*.

Nor are the Deserving to expect better treatment from the patronage of their Judges; from those whose condition enables them, or whose stations intrust them to confer these Rewards. They are often ignorant; and as often corrupt. And even such of them who have good intentions, are commonly of so narrow minds and contracted views, as never to seek, or never to reach, a merit become eminent; but content themselves with giving that to Mediocrity, which is due only to superior Talents: while the Corrupt are even vigilant to suppress merit, as a thing troublesome to them, both in their natural dispositions and civil pursuits.

If we turn from private to public life, we shall find, that the *ambitious* Adventurer has still more formidable Dangers to encounter. Here, every man has every other leagued against him; and all ranged under the banners of those leading passions, Malice and Selfishness. Malice will leave no means of calumny and slander untried or unemployed, to arrest him in his course: and Selfishness will secretly put in practice every art of fraud and hypocrisy, to divert and draw him from the goal.

Such

Such is the common issue of human affairs: And hence hath arisen, in every age and place, that uniform complaint of defeated virtue, and of merit neglected; of integrity vainly struggling with corruption, and of wisdom succumbing under the bauble of folly.

Now St. Paul, writing to the *Corinthians*, a People well versed in the knowledge and ways of men; taught, by long experience, the instability and vanity of human grandeur, wearied out by disastrous tugs with Fortune, and their attention now strongly drawn, by the opening view of *better things*; St. Paul, I say, takes advantage of this favourable situation, to turn their passions from human objects, so unsuccessfully pursued, towards heavenly, where their well-meant endeavours would always bring them off *more than Conquerors.*

And here, my argument leads me to shew, that, in the pursuit of spiritual acquirements, all things are as promising and easy, as they are discouraging and difficult in the disastrous projects of worldly Ambition. Instead of anxiety, toil, labour, opposition, oppression, and final disappointment; all Here is peace and pleasure; joy in believing, divine assistance in obtaining, and full security in possessing. For,

1st, A struggle for celestial Honours has the advantage of the worldly, in this, that All win the prize who have the noble ambition to contend for it. In the worldly Race below, *all run* (says the Apostle) *but one receiveth the prize:* And (says history and experience)

experience) THAT ONE is, generally, the most worthless of the contenders.

2dly, In pursuit of worldly matters (as hath been observed) all our concurrents are our enemies, and do all they can to hinder and divert us in our course. In the pursuit of spiritual things, all our concurrents are our friends—are our coadjutors. The only strife amongst good men, in the race to Heaven, is, who shall lend the best assistance to his labouring brother: The slow is helped forward; the weak is supported; the backward reproved; the desponding encouraged; and the fallen raised up.

3dly, The third advantage which the Aspirant to divine felicity has over the vain seeker after earthly honours, is the proper qualification of the Adventurers. In worldly pursuits, when all other impediments are away, there is need of great and uncommon abilities, either of mind or body; such as health, courage, activity, industry, vigilance, and a capacity of knowledge and eloquence. In spiritual concerns, our success depends solely on ourselves; in meaning well, and acting honestly. This supports our confidence, and secures us from all irresolute anxiety; the bane of life, which clogs our endeavours, imbitters our sweetest prospects, and frequently defeats our best-laid schemes of happiness.

4thly, The last difference, so infinitely to the advantage of religious pursuits, which I shall beg leave to enforce, is in the stability of the things aimed at.—Could the successful aspirant after

earthly things secure to himself the possession of the *prize* he has obtained, for any reasonable time; or spend, what is called, a *Life* in the enjoyment of it; some little might be said in his excuse—nothing, indeed, to justify the wisdom of his choice; yet something, however, to excuse the folly of his prevention. But, alas! the case is much otherwise. His glory shrinks like a shadow from his gripe, even while he is attending to the acclamations of his triumph. Either the time, employed in the pursuit, hath drawn out life to its dregs; or the fatigues, attendant on the contest, have broken and destroyed the basis of his Frame and Constitution; so that the Garland, woven to celebrate his Victory, serves only to ornament his Herse. Or, if haply he succeed while in the full vigour of life, he is then often to undergo a second struggle, as hazardous, and generally more toilsome, than the first—to preserve from the Envious what he had fairly won from his Emulators.

But he who *runs the race* which Religion *sets before us*, is subject to none of these reverses of fate or fortune. All is peace, and *joy in believing* here below; and hereafter the sure possession of an *eternal Crown of Glory*.

Since then it is so clearly seen on which side the advantage lies, let us act like Men; like such who know how to form a reasonable Choice; and make our greatest interest our principal concern.

But then, in this spiritual Adventure, let us carry with us our worldly prudence: *Let us not so run* (to use the Apostle's expression) *as one that beateth the*

the air. Let us not give ear either to the delusions of Bigotry, or Fanaticism. Let us not deceive ourselves, with the fancy that we may, on the one hand, obtain the *prize*, by the observance of idle and superstitious Ceremonies; or, on the other, by the delusive feelings, or ecstatic visions of Enthusiasm: but let us, as the same divine Guide directs us, *so run that we may obtain*: that is, advance steadily in that sober Course, which the Gospel has marked out to us—*of repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; under the guidance, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

SERMON XXIV.

SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE.

MATT. chap. xxii. ver. 12.

AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, FRIEND, HOW CAMEST THOU IN HITHER, NOT HAVING A WEDDING GARMENT? AND HE WAS SPEECHLESS. THEN THE KING SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, BIND HIM HAND AND FOOT, AND TAKE HIM AWAY.—

IN this Parable of the marriage-feast of the King's Son, a select company was first bidden; and they refusing the invitation, every wanderer that occurred was indiscriminately entertained. The Parable was told by our blessed Master, to shadow out the *nature* and *fortune* of his Gospel; first offered to the chosen people of God, the *Jews*; and, on their rejection of it, laid open to the acceptance of the *Gentiles* of every denomination. So far concerning the *general fortune* of the Gospel.

But in that part of it from whence the words of my text are taken, its *peculiar nature* is, in a very lively manner, set before us. The *bidding* to a marriage-feast is a free and gracious favour; and that

Guest was deemed unworthy of it who did not come in such a habit as was the customary mark of his receiving the honour done him, with reverence and gratitude. The *Wedding Garment* was the symbolum which admitted him to the Feast: to be found without it was an evidence of his being an Intruder; and justly subjected him to the resentment of the Lord and Founder of the entertainment. For in ancient times it was the custom for him who was bidden to a marriage, to come in a robe of ceremony, so fashioned and adorned as to be expressive of the Characters and Circumstances of the wedded Pair, by which it became a badge denoting the relation he bore unto them.

Now, this Marriage was the Marriage of Christ with his Church: and the Feast to which the Elect were invited, was *life and immortality.* So that if we consider the state and condition of things, the *Wedding Garment* will appear to mean nothing but FAITH in Christ the Saviour; this sacred badge being peculiarly characteristic of the nature and genius of the Gospel. So that the worthy bidden Guest was he who was *clothed upon* (as the Apostle expresses it) *with Christ Jesus.*

In its more general turn, the Parable was fitted to represent every age of the Church. Some who were bidden would not come; and some who accepted the invitation would come irreverently and profanely; would be so far from complying with the terms of the invitation, as insolently to affix to it different terms of their own.

But no Age hath so well exemplified the disobedience

dience and insult, held forth in the Parable, as that in which we live. Most of those who are *bidden* now, slight the invitation; and many of those who condescend to come, dishonour the Feast by rejecting the condition on which they are to be received, FAITH IN THE MESSIAH, the *Wedding Garment* of the Church of Christ.

We read, in the text, that when he, who came without the appropriated Robe, was reproved for his neglect, *he was speechless*. But the Ministers of the Gospel must not expect to have our irreligious Convicts at this advantage. They are ready addressed to reason with us, and shew that "the crime we lay lay so much stress upon, is at worst only the rejection of a new-fashioned Garb: that though they be without their Robe of ceremony, yet their Heart is right; they honour the Lord of the feast, and *reverence* his Son; they so square their life, as to be worthy of God's favour and friendship: and for the rest, they are sure, he will never quarrel with them for a punctilio." In a word (to speak out of the terms of the Parable) the new-fangled modern Christian is sure, he says, that "the man who observes the *moral Law*, shall, without any more ado, be entitled to the favour of his Maker, and consequently, to all the benefits of Christ's Gospel: for how *faith in Jesus* can *justify* him, or be the very thing which shall entitle him to eternal life, he cannot comprehend: that it may be of use as a viaticum here, he will not deny, since Jesus has more clearly explained the nature and rectified the practice of the *moral Law*, and so is his best Instructor in its *righteous-*

ness: but how this *Faith* should be the only Introducer to God's presence hereafter, while the *moral man*, laden deep with *good works*, is kept without—*credat Judæus Apella*."—Such is the confident talk of the PHILOSOPHERS of our time. Yet *justification by faith alone* is the constant language of the Gospel.

And to shew that it is not the Language of Fanaticism, I shall endeavour to evince the *reasonableness* of the Christian doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and of the *necessity* of FAITH to obtain the promises of the Gospel. By which the egregious folly of expecting to obtain them on any other condition will amply appear.

Let us then, in compliance with the false notions of these men, suppose that a strict and uniform obedience to the *moral Law* will entitle us to *everlasting life*; and the rather, because St. Paul, in his reasoning with the Jews, seems to concede (though by way of argument *ad homines)* that had they observed a strict and uniform obedience to the *Law*, it would have given *life*; and *righteousness*, as he expresses it, *had been of the Law:* but that, failing in this, they were brought into a state of *death*; from which they could be redeemed only *by faith in Jesus.*

Now, were this strictly true, what would the race of Adam be the better for so vain a title? For who of us, except him who was the Son of God as well as of Adam, ever preserved his integrity inviolate, and did not frequently deviate from moral rectitude? though he might as often recover himself, and by repentance and amendment put in again

for God's mercy and favour; yet still man had irrevocably forfeited all claim to *eternal life*, even though *eternal life* had, indeed, been attendant on strict uniform obedience.

Nor let any one imagine, from what he thinks he can collect of the light of Nature, concerning God's readiness to pardon a returning sinner, and to receive him into his favour, that this grace consists in a restoration to *eternal life*. Such a fancy is founded in a mistaken notion that *eternal life* is the debt or wages, or covenanted reward, of our sincere and careful endeavours to obey the *moral Law* of God. The light of Nature gives us a very different view of things. It sets before us the infinite disparity between our imperfect obedience, in this momentary state, and the reward of *eternal life* in a better. If we will believe the Apostle, it teaches this, and this only, *that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him*; and that the good *moral man* who misses of his reward here, will find it hereafter: that the reward, indeed, will be abundant; for though we be *unprofitable Servants*, yet is he a most bountiful Master. But *abundant* and *eternal* belong to different systems.

This Truth, so clearly deduced from natural Reason, Revelation supports and confirms. *Eternal life* in this Dispensation never being so much as once represented in Holy Scripture as the *constitutional reward* of the virtuous man's practice, but always as the *free gift* of God.

The consequence of which truth is, that if this *free gift* were offered on Condition (and that it was, all

sides

sides are agreed), the Condition must be of a thing different from that virtuous life which hath God's favour naturally annexed to it.

Accordingly we find, that the condition was, in fact, different. When life and immortality was first offered to Adam, the condition was the observance of a *positive* command, *not to eat of the forbidden fruit:* and when, after the forfeiture of this free Inheritance by the first man's disobedience, we were restored to life by the death and sufferings of Christ, the condition was another *positive* command, *faith in the Messiah.* And here the goodness and compassion of the Godhead to miserable man are most eminent. *Eternal life* was, as we say, first given on the observance of a *positive* command, a command to do or to forbear doing; and therefore was almost as soon forfeited as it was bestowed. And we may reasonably conclude, from the weakness and perversity of human nature, that as often as it was bestowed on the same condition, it would be as often forfeited. To secure, therefore, so precious a gift to the forfeited Offspring of Adam (for a condition was not annexed, to tantalize our hopes, but to exercise our obedience) God hath finally revealed the condition of *eternal life*, to be something to be believed, instead of something to be observed. From henceforth the gift was no longer precarious, but secure and certain. So much order, reason, and beauty, are to be found in the various Dispensations of Religion!

And here let me observe, that the not distinguishing between the Rewards objected to the encouragement

couragement of obedience by *natural*, and those by *revealed* Religion, hath been the sole cause of those dark and endless Debates concerning *Justification by Faith:* For while one Party explained away this fundamental Principle of the Gospel, the Other supported it by arguments which debase human Reason, and dishonour the divine Attributes. In the mean time, this *distinction alone* (equally founded in Reason and Revelation, and confounded between folly and sophistry) would have relieved the labouring cause of Truth from all the absurdities and impieties employed in its defence.—But, how the Doctrine of *Salvation by* FAITH ALONE, can consist with the other, of *the necessity of good works to obtain the favour of God*, and how that which hath a *condition annexed*, and *a price paid*, can be called a FREE GIFT, will be shewn at large in another place. It sufficeth at present, that the Key to this Mystery is here intrusted to your keeping.

And now, to apply this Scripture-Doctrine of *Eternal life by Faith*, to the consideration of all who call themselves Christians.

I will presume, that the aim of all such is to obtain the *Gospel-rewards:* for, though, in the fashionable language of the *mere moral Christian*, they ask no more than the *favour* of God, yet they consider this *favour* as only another name for *eternal life*. But this *moral Christian* must have a very high opinion of the perfection of his Morals, if he can imagine that, because *natural Religion* tells him, it will entitle him to God's *favour*, that therefore it will entitle

title him to *eternal life*; a free gift, which Revelation brings to light, and offers on a different condition, namely, *Faith in the Messiah*. Such a fancy is indeed attempting the *Kingdom of heaven by force*. But it is not that force which Scripture recommends, of *faith and prayer*, but the profane violence of human presumption. And of what is miserable man so vain?—The *morality* of his actions. Yet are these, for the most part, little better than his more shining frailties. And an ancient Father, if he considered them in the concrete rather than the abstract, did not calumniate, when he called them *splendida peccata*.

Let a man examine the *Condition* of his Morals; and he will find such bias of appetite, such heat of passion, and such obliquity of self-interest, as cannot but stain and sully all the purity of Virtue. Or if it escape this pollution, yet the silent influences of Habit and Constitution so mix themselves with the true motive to moral practice (the sense of duty) that he will find its intrinsic value greatly alloyed. If he consider the *Qualification* of his Morals, he will generally find them pushed too far, or else stopping short of the point of perfection. If he consider the *Uniformity* of his Morals, he will find them receiving perpetual interruption, from negligence and inattention, from secular cares and pursuits, from strong appetites, and from stronger temptations: and if, after this, he will still persist in thinking *such Morals* deserving of an *eternal reward*, he will give us, in his *Modesty*, a still stronger evidence of the futility of human Virtue.

But

But he will say, "It is not so much human merit, as the mercies of God (which Natural Religion teaches to be infinite, those mercies which Divines call the *uncovenanted*) whereon he relies for the attainment of *eternal life*."

It is certain, that God's *goodness and mercy* are infinite: and had we only these to bring into the account, we might perhaps be left to conclude, that when God thinks fit to reward, he rewards in proportion to them, that is, *infinitely*, or at least so abundantly, as to surpass all human conception. But we reckon too fast, and, in our estimate, forget, that though his *goodness and mercy* be infinite, his *Wisdom and his Justice* are so likewise: And what abatement the consideration of these latter attributes may make in the rewards due to human Virtue, we have seen already. Nay, though his *Justice* might not exact a severe balance on the account, yet his *Wisdom* might. It may (for aught natural Reason hath discovered to the contrary) be necessary to the moral Government of the Universe, that the most severe example should be made of man wilfully wicked. And nothing can clear up this dark and doubtful prospect, and set the overwearied mind at rest, but REVELATION: Which, by teaching the *atonement* of Christ once offered on the Cross, shews us that God's *Justice*, from which we had reason to expect such dreadful abatements in the rewards due to human virtue, is appeased and disarmed; and by proposing *eternal life through faith*, satisfies us that his *Wisdom*, in the government of the Universe, does not require the severest punishment for Sin.

Yet

Yet our modern Masters of reason think it a high point of philosophic wisdom, rather to rely on the *uncovenanted* mercies of God, which Natural Religion so obscurely holds out to us, than on those *covenanted* mercies which the Revealed hath so openly and clearly laid before us.

But now, these men perhaps may say, "We rest perfectly satisfied with the Reward, whatever it may prove, which Natural Religion tells us we shall receive at the hand of God, for our sincere endeavours to deserve his favour and protection."

But, I am afraid, this false modesty will be found as absurd as it is impious; and that those who will not labour for the whole reward, which Revelation offers, will lose even that which Natural Religion may encourage them to seek.

Those *without* the Church of Christ may be distinguished and divided into such who have never been sufficiently informed of the *saving name* of Jesus; and such who, on a sufficient proposal of it to their acceptance, have thought fit to reject it.

How those will be dealt with who lie bound in *invincible ignorance*, the grace and benignity of our holy Religion does more than intimate. It expressly teaches, that the merits of Christ's death and passion have a retrospect to all times and ages since Adam, on whose trespass this Redemption rises. It was for the whole Race of mankind that Christ died. So, it seems most equitable, that those, whom his name never reached, should have the same right to the benefits of his death, *by their morals*, that those who believe in him have *by their Faith*.

As

As this best suits the gracious *nature* of an *universal Religion*, so it seems necessary that, for the support of its *dignity*, those who, after a sufficient invitation to accept the terms of salvation by Jesus, have, by the misguidance of their passions, wilfully and knowingly rejected it, should, together with that, lose all their claim to what Natural Religion (the foundation on which Revelation stands) had encouraged them to expect.

Our *Moralists* then, if indeed they aspire to the *favour* of God, are reduced to this distress, either to call in FAITH to procure for them *eternal life*; or else, if they will admit no Associate to their *Morality*, to rest contented with what the disinterested pursuit of Virtue can afford them.—All that we can do further for them is to pray to God to direct them in their choice.

SERMON XXV.

THE BENEFITS OF HERESY.

1 Cor. xi. 19.

THERE MUST BE ALSO HERESIES AMONGST YOU, THAT THEY WHICH ARE APPROVED MAY BE MADE MANIFEST AMONGST YOU.

IN this observation, the Apostle hints at one condition of the *moral World*, inseparable, as it is at present constituted, from its existence, a mixture of truth and falsehood, analogous to things salutary and noxious in the *Natural*. But, in both Worlds, the GOOD produced by this mixture is so eminent as fully to support the trite observation, that *Evil was suffered for the sake of a greater good*. Yet was God so far from *constituting* evil in the moral world for the sake of that good which it occasioned, that the whole of this Ordinance was *good:* out of which the folly and perversity of Man produced *evil*. If it be asked, how God came to suffer this perversion? The answer is, the subject was *free-agency*, which was not to be controlled. All that, according to our ideas, could be done, without impinging upon it, was

done, by God's turning the natural tendency of *evil* to the production of *new good.* So that God and Man have been perpetually at strife; the One to produce good out of evil; the other, to produce evil out of good.

The greatest good ever vouchafed ungrateful Man was *Salvation by the Gospel of Jesus.* Yet was he no sooner possessed of this blessing than he abused it, by the production of Heresies and false Opinions. Out of which evil, God again, according to his gracious way of working, produced new good; a species of which is here mentioned in my text, the *manifestation* of the *approved.—There must be Heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest amongst you.*

I shall therefore consider these two particulars, Who are meant by the *approved*; and what is the nature and end of their *manifestation.*

I. The false Opinions obtruded on the Church of Christ, and taught as articles of Faith, which the Apostle calls *Heresies*, made their fortune amongst the People, either by flattering the levity of their minds, or by soothing the corruption of their hearts. They either pretended to clear up mysteries, to resolve difficulties, and by new lights, to lead us further into Truth; or else to allow of practices, to which the written Law of the Gospel, and the received discipline of the Church, gave no indulgence. In a word, to be *wise above what is written*, and to be set at large from what is commanded.

Now the Teachers of such Doctrines would not fail

fail of willing Hearers. All the vain and the vicious; the lovers of novelty and the lovers of pleasure; all who prided themselves in thinking with the Few; or had degraded themselves by acting with the Many. All such would be easily caught in these well-baited traps of *Heresy*.

The only security from these snares was MODESTY OR VIRTUE. The *modest man* would remain pure from the itch of novelty, and an over-eager appetite for those sublime Doctrines which the ancient *Heretics* pretended to have received in trust for the use of their followers: And the *virtuous* man would become prejudiced against all Practices which opened a door to libertinism and concupiscence. All these would be naturally led to make comparisons between the rank Doctrines of their new Teachers, and the simplicity, the clearness, the rationality, and the purity, of what was delivered in the Gospel. And the parallel would end in a more full conviction of the Truth, and a warmer adherence to its interests. To These, the Apostle gives the name of the APPROVED.

II. But the great good here hinted at, as arising from the evil of Heresies, is that the *Approved* may be made MANIFEST: Of which *manifestation* we are now to consider the nature and the end.

1. Its nature is seen, first, in a constant and public adherence to the doctrines of the Catholic Church; in affording no countenance to the disturbers of its peace, either by neglecting the public offices of the established worship, or by frequenting

the assemblies of Separatists: and, at the same time, in shewing (if they be able) the reasonableness and defending the truth of the orthodox opinions, and in laying open the sophistry and absurdity of heretical novelties.

2. Secondly, It is seen in the exercise of the most perfect Charity to the persons of Heretics: employing only brotherly persuasion, enforced by manly reasoning, to draw them from their errors, and bring them back to the sheepfold of Christ. And when these prove ineffectual, then to leave them to the righteous judgment of God; neither employing coercive power ourselves, nor willingly suffering it to be employed by others. In a word—to use, for their reduction, no severity but that of Reason, and no force but that of Prayer.

The benefit to the Church, in this *manifestation*, respects both the *approved* themselves, and also their Christian Brethren of the same Community.

1. The *profession* of our Faith is represented in Scripture as a warfare with the World; and that *the life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel* is the reward of our Victory in this Contest. It was fit therefore that so great a gift should be earned by some proportionate labour and hazard. Hence every age of the Church hath had its trials: At one time, Persecutions; at another, Heresies and Schisms; and at another, a general Defection from the Faith. All for the accomplishment of the wise ends of Providence: many of them inscrutable to

to us: of some, Reason directs us to form probable conjectures; and of some again we have a full knowledge, from Revelation: Of this last sort is the truth recorded in my text, *that there must be Heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest.*

Amongst the various conflicting evils of the Church, this of *Heresies* was one of the first. And its use to the *Approved* consists in its being a severe and salutary trial of their FAITH and VIRTUE.

The mind of man is naturally delighted with *Novelties:* and if the Novelties be such as do not directly oppose, but pretend only to explain and rectify his received opinions, he will be tempted to regard them with a favourable eye.

A pretence to sublimer knowledge, which is ever the boast of *Heresy*, will strongly incline Humanity, naturally vain, and aspiring to things beyond its reach, to listen to these seducers.

Doctrines which flatter the corruption of the heart, and humour the perversity of the will, as heretical doctrines always do, will be apt to gain a ready entrance into the unfortified and unguarded Mind.

But they are not only our *Vices* but our *Virtues* likewise which expose men to the delusions of *Heresy*.

Humility, or a low opinion of ourselves, disposes us to give ear to all such who, with the confidence of authority, offer to teach us things important, and, till now, unknown to us: And *Modesty*, sure attendant on humility, is apt to interpret that confidence into a mark of certainty of knowledge.

Charity will not suffer us to suspect that those who cast aside all temporal consideration for themselves, can have any other view than the interests of truth: And *Christian Simplicity*, the offspring of Charity, leads us to conclude, that when such men suffer all kind of evil for the support of their Opinions, nothing less than the power of truth can support them in such a conflict.

In a word, the *love of Virtue* itself inclines us much in favour of men who, as Heretics frequently do, lead a life of temperance, chastity, justice, and beneficence.

When, therefore, both our worst and our best qualities equally conspire to betray us into *heretical* opinions, it must be a more than ordinary fortitude in Faith, and sobriety in Virtue, which can preserve us safe from these delusions, and bring us off, as the Apostle says, *approved*.

And as, in the course of this trial, the faith of the *approved* must needs be rectified and established, and their virtue purified and perfected, the good produced by it makes sufficient amends to God's Church for the ill permitted in these tares of heresy thus sown by the *Evil one*.

But still, this is not the whole good produced in thus *manifesting the approved through heresies*. Another, and indeed the principal, is the useful Example of the *approved*, to the Church or Congregation of the faithful; the gross body of which have neither understandings nor hearts of sufficient strength to detect, or defend themselves from, the arts of cunning and industrious seducers, such as the Leaders

in

in *Heresy* generally are. Or if, haply, they have been taught to keep out of their snares, they are too apt to run into the opposite extreme, violating all the rules of justice in their treatment of these Disturbers of the Church's peace.

Now the EXAMPLE of the *approved* is of great use to the body of the Faithful in both these respects; to fortify their *reason* against delusion; and, when that is done, to restrain their *passions* against the deluders.

The strongest argument with the People for the truth of their religious Opinions, is the seeing them maintained and supported by men, whose learning, parts, and piety, they hold in reverence. This is a species of moral evidence most flattering to the capacity of the Vulgar; such of the Vulgar, I mean, whose natural modesty, or conscience of their own weakness, is not quite effaced by the heat and fumes of Enthusiasm.—An argument founded in the eternal nature of things, and formed on the rules of severe logic, is, in their gross conceptions, a slippery support to their Faith; and, in comparison of an argument which rises on a great name and a specious authority, very cloudy and evanid.

The influence, therefore, which the *example* of great and good men has on the minds of the People, is exceeding powerful.

Nor is the CONDUCT of the *approved* towards *Heretics* and *Schismatics* less serviceable to the Church of Christ. Moderation is not the lot of the People. They approve and execrate; they love and hate with violence: and when once they have condemned

the innovation, which they are readily induced to do, on observing it to be condemned by those they most esteem and venerate, they are easily led to oppose the Innovators with a violence which both natural equity and the genius of Christianity forbid. Now here again the Example of the *Approved* is of sovereign efficacy to teach them charity and moderation. And this Example is so powerful, that there is no instance to be found of a persecuting spirit which hath long continued, or arrived to any height, but where the men in most credit for their stations, abilities, and dazzling virtues, have encouraged and led it on. And whenever such have, by their conduct, been seen to disapprove of violent measures, the folly and rage of the People have presently subsided.

Thus amply rewarded are the *Approved* of my text, for all they undergo in this trial, by the benefit they procure to the Public in their EXAMPLE. And thus is the *evil of heresies*, by the gracious disposition of things, turned to *good*, and *heresy*, by a contrary exertion, made to produce those two capital Gospel-virtues, FAITH AND CHARITY. So admirable a vindication of God's general Providence does the sense of my text contain—*there must be heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest amongst you.*

SERMON XXVI.

Preached at Bristol, November 29th, 1759, being the day appointed for a Public Thanksgiving for Victories obtained by the British Arms.

EZEKIEL XXXVI. 22.

FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, I DO NOT THIS FOR YOUR SAKES, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, BUT FOR MY HOLY NAME'S SAKE.

GOD, by his Prophet, having here foretold the unmerited blessings which he had in store for the *House of Israel*; lest this wretched People should become vain in their imaginations, and fancy that these mercies were reserved for them, as the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, thought fit to mortify their folly in the words of my text—*I do not this for your sakes, O House of Israel, but for my holy name's sake.* As much as to say, "Be careful not to mistake the purpose of these promised blessings, as if they were the reward of your Virtues; for, by your repeated Crimes you have long since forfeited all claim to my special

special protection: nor yet mistake them for the effects of any partial fondness which your vanity may make you presume I have for you. I employ you only as the Instruments (and this is an honour you little deserve) for carrying on the grand system of my moral government; which requiring that some one Nation should be set apart for the Repository of the knowledge of the true God, I have, in honour of my faithful Servant, your Father Abraham, chosen you for the Ministers of this sacred Trust."

To this purpose does the Divine Majesty of Heaven speak to his *chosen People* in the words of my text. And as all *Scripture is written for our instruction, to whom the ends of the world are come,* let us conceive that, to the same purpose, he now speaks to us on this joyful occasion; which the piety of Government has thought fit to sanctify, by the appointment of a public thanksgiving for the late great mercies bestowed upon this Nation, in a seasonable Plenty and civil harmony at home; and in the unparalleled successes of the British Arms abroad.

The nature of these domestic blessings, after having been for some time alarmed with a suspension of them, in penurious Harvests and divided Councils, is best understood by the happy difference in our feelings. As to the high importance of our successes abroad against the Common Disturber of the peace of Europe—this is a matter to be left to the Politician. On this occasion, I presume, I shall discharge my duty better, in attempting to explain to you those dispositions and sentiments of piety with which you should possess yourselves, to make this grateful

grateful offering acceptable to your gracious Protector.

If therefore you be *more ready to* HEAR, *than to give the sacrifice of Fools*, you should consider, *For whose sake*, Reason tells you, these great blessings have been conferred upon you: for, on this you are to regulate the testimony of your gratitude. Now Reason will never direct you to conclude, that they were given *for your sakes*, unless there be a greater portion of sobriety, virtue, and religion amongst yourselves, than is to be found in the rest of the Christian world. Now if this rare series of good fortune hath not quite intoxicated you (as good fortune is too apt to do), a slight view of the moral condition of these Kingdoms would soon cure you of all such vain imaginations. For where is the holy Faith in Jesus more openly despised by the Great, or more vilely ridiculed by the little People, than in this our Island? A love of the Public is now laughed at, as the Chimera of the young and unexperienced: a general Corruption, under the name of Prudence, walks barefaced; and as general a pursuit of Pleasure, miscalled Happiness, bears down before it all the relations and charities of civil and domestic life. Christian candour, therefore, will not be offended, if, on this view of things, I address you, my Countrymen, and Brethren, in the words of the Prophet—*Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, but for my holy name's sake.*

If we turn from the merits of the Contenders to the merits of the Cause, neither Party, I am afraid, will have reason to expect any very distinguished

guished interposition of Providence in their favour. Let us estimate the original claim of European Nations to American possessions, on the severe Principles of Natural and Civil Laws; and then lay our hand on our heart, and ask it seriously, Whether the unadjusted claims of the contending nations to desarts of their own making, in the new world, be such a quarrel, as that in which the Creator of all men, the equal Father of the human race, is likely, in any extraordinary manner, to interfere? Let us do this, and we shall hardly have an answer much to the satisfaction of our vanity.

We should, therefore, seek for a cause of these uncommon mercies, more worthy the Majesty of Heaven. And we should seek for it somewhere in the course of God's general Providence, in the moral government of the world. And if there we find it, we shall soon see, that the blessings bestowed were *not for our sakes, but for his holy name's sake.*

God, for the great ends of his universal providence, inscrutable to us, was pleased to station his favoured creature Man in a world abounding with natural and moral evil.

But this gracious God, whose mercies are over all his works, hath, as a curb and check to these evils, which it is man's duty, as well as interest, to oppose; and his merit as well as happiness to subdue; instituted two capital ordinances, CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION: Supports as necessary for the Moral World, as the SUN and MOON for the Natural: the One, to sustain and cheer us in this vale of miseries; the Other, to direct our benighted

nighted footsteps towards the happier regions of light and immortality.

We may be certain, therefore, that the same Providence, which keeps the celestial orbs in their courses, will be ever watchful that these two MORAL LIGHTS suffer no extinction or irretrievable decay. For as neither *Comets* above, nor *Ignis fatui* below, can supply the use of those Luminaries, so neither can *despotic rule* or *wild fanaticism* supply the use of these.

Yet as the moral world, for very obvious reasons, is infinitely more subject to disorder than the natural, it may sometimes happen that these *moral lights* shall suffer such dreadful eclipses, and have their splendor so polluted and impaired, as to shine purely no where, and brightly only in some small obscure corner of the Globe. Thus, for instance, the blessing of Civil Liberty, the source of all human happiness, was, for many ages, totally extinct; and the knowledge of the Deity himself, the fountain-head of Truth, was, for as many more, confined within the narrow limits of the land of Israel.

Now this being the precarious condition of the *moral world* in general, let us see what may be the actual state of CIVIL GOVERNMENT and RELIGION at present on the earth.

As to the former, if we look round us, from the nearest to the remotest Continent, we shall no where find a *Society* founded on the true Principles of Civil Liberty. Either the nature of its Convention hath been so ill conceived (as in the *East*) that the absolute despotic *Form* hath been mistaken for the immediate

immediate Institution of Heaven; and, consequently, every species of free Government, for essential Licence and Impiety: or else, where the rights of mankind have been better understood (as in the *West*), where the three legitimate *Forms*, the Monarchic, the Aristocratic, and the Popular, have been truly discriminated, yet men seeing that civil freedom was naturally confined to these three *Forms*, erroneously concluded, that each of them separately, and *unmixed* with the other two, was able to sustain all the rights and advantages of it: not considering that, while they operate singly, they are but the same Tyranny in a different shape: For while each *Form* exists alone, the whole Sovereignty resides in a part only of the Community, which subjects the rest to despotic rule.

But true and lasting Liberty results from the skilful combination of the three *Forms* with one another; where each of the Orders, which governs absolutely in each *Form*, hath its due share of the Sovereign Power, and no more. Here all impotency of rule is eternally excluded; for no man, or body of men, can exercise Tyranny over itself.

A Government, thus truly free, is like one of those sovereign Medicines, so much spoken of, where each of the various ingredients of which it is composed, does, together with its virtues, contain such noxious qualities, that, if used simply and alone, might occasion great disorders, but when skilfully intermixed with the rest, the whole hath corrected the noxious qualities and exalted the salutary virtues of each part.

Whenever

Whenever such a well-composed Society becomes despotic, it must be by the silent dissolution of its complex Form; as when one Order usurping on the rest, hath gotten the whole of the Sovereignty to itself.

With so happy a Constitution of Government hath it pleased Divine Providence to bless this Island; the honoured Repository of sacred Freedom, at a time when almost all the other civilized Nations have betrayed their trust, and delivered up civil Liberty, the most precious gift of Nature, for a prey to their fellow-creatures.

Now the preservation of this sacred Ordinance being no less necessary to the temporal welfare of man, than the knowledge of the true God is to his spiritual, we must conclude, that the same gracious Providence would be now no less watchful for the preservation of the British Nation, than it was of old, for the Jewish: yet still speaking the same language to both—*I do not this for your sakes, but for my holy name's sake.*

If we turn from *Government* to RELIGION, we shall have the same reason to adore the gracious Majesty of Heaven still working for his *holy name's sake*, that is, for the general good of mankind. For though it would be vanity to boast, in this case as in the other, that true Religion, like civil Liberty, is to be found only in Great Britain, when we behold the Protestant Faith, professed in the purity of the Gospel, in so many of our kindred Churches on the Continent, yet this we cannot but declare, and should always acknowledge with the utmost gratitude, that the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, by means

means of the mighty power of its Imperial HEAD, is become the Fortress and Bulwark of the Protestant profession throughout the world; and therefore, we may be assured, the object of God's peculiar regard; whose special Providence works chiefly for general ends.

In the course of this quarrel, it hath been sometimes said, that the present combustion in Europe was to be regarded in the light of a RELIGIOUS WAR, against a Confederacy animated by Romish Superstition and Tyranny: and sometimes again, that it broke out and was carried on only for the discussion of our civil Interests. But in whatever shifting lights it may suit the ends of Politicians to present it, the *Lord of Hosts* himself, by so visibly *fighting our battles*, hath fully decided the question, and in the midst of victory hath declared it to be indeed a RELIGIOUS WAR: for human presumption itself will never venture to account for such distinguished mercies to a sinful nation any otherwise, than by considering Great Britain in the light, as of the sole remaining Trustee of *Civil Freedom*, so of the great Bulwark of *Gospel Truth*.

Let us, therefore, on this day of Triumph, and perhaps more suitably on this day than any other, *humble ourselves* before the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven, confess our total unworthiness of these distinguished mercies, and echo back again to the Throne of Grace those awful words which once proceeded from it—"We confess, O Almighty Father, that the great things which thou hast done for us, *were not done for our sakes, but for thy holy name's sake.*"

Nor

Nor will this consideration abate, but, on the contrary, increase our Gratitude and Joy.

Our *Gratitude*, for the honour done us, in being made the Instruments, in the hand of God, for supporting and carrying on the great System of his moral Government.

Our *Joy*, in the most enlarged exercise of Christian Charity; while we consider Great Britain as become, by God's special appointment, the common Benefactor of Mankind.

But these sentiments are not suitably expressed by the mere explosions of our mouth, in solemn praises easily discharged: they are to be manifested in the service of our lives, which now becomes doubly due; a service regulated on the nature and end of the Blessings bestowed: for, without the knowledge of these blessings, our praises may be presumption, and our service but a busy impertinence.

To assist you, therefore, my Brethren, in your good purposes, I have kept you thus long, in explaining what I take to be the true nature and design of the blessings we now commemorate. If we be made sensible that they were bestowed for the *sake* of this Repository of Civil Liberty, this Bulwark of the Christian Faith, we shall easily understand what returns we ought to make for them.

If *Civil Liberty*, the source of all worldly Good, be so precious in the sight of God, and yet its influence, in the revolutions of state, so contracted, and its very existence so precarious, How great should be our care, with whom the small remains of

it are now intrusted, that we ourselves contribute nothing to the further diminution of it!

By what hath been already observed to you, it is manifest that this glorious Fortress of British Liberty can never be taken by storm; however liable it may be to the silent decays of Time, and to the secret undermine of wicked men.

To provide therefore against these mischiefs, we should discountenance and oppose ourselves to PUBLIC CORRUPTION of every kind, whether it affect the Liberty of the Subject, or the Prerogative of the Crown. Both sorts are now grown so numerous and excessive, that the limits of this Discourse will only permit me just to mention a capital instance of each.

Amongst those which affect the liberty of the Subject, is that profligate venality now become universal in the choice of our Representatives to Parliament; and against which, no Laws human or divine, hath yet been able to put a check.

Let us once then, for a trial at least, encourage a careful choice of able and honest men; and support our choice only by honourable and legal methods. But if this fail, and it be found a task too difficult to draw a mercenary People all at once from habitual Prostitution, let us, however, in mere compassion to humanity (the honour of Religion set aside) employ all our interests, in our several stations, to remove the cause, though the guiltless cause, of that pestilential PERJURY, which rages through the Nation on every return of a new Parliament. Reflect, my Brethren,

Brethren, on the dreadful contrast between a *general Thanksgiving* and a *general Election.* A whole People, one year devoting themselves to God; and the next to the *Mammon of unrighteousness.*

The species of *corruption* which most affects the rights and dues of the Crown, and consequently the operations of Government, may be summed up in partial entries, collusive evasions, and that more daring contempt of Law and Justice, a contraband Traffic. And here, while you are *rendering to God the things that are God's* (and what is more justly his than gratitude for mercies received?) let me press it on your Consciences, to *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.*

When you have done this, another duty will remain for your gratitude to discharge; and that is, to join together in support of a virtuous and upright administration, whenever we shall be blessed with it; and till then, to avoid taking party, or fomenting the discords amongst the self-interested Great, by following factious men or factious measures.

These are the slight outlines of that duty we owe our Country; and which we should now think of paying, in discharge of that immense debt of gratitude we owe to our heavenly Protector, too large indeed to be all lavished on this one Object, how ennobled soever by the late uncommon mercies of Providence.

Another, still more intimate, will claim its share; I mean, our National Church, established in the purity of the Gospel; and now become the common Fortress of the Faith.

Nothing but sad experience would suffer us to conceive that a Church of this importance, honoured by its friends, and dreaded by its enemies abroad, should be insulted by Infidels, disturbed and dishonoured by Fanatics, and weakened by the separation of our too scrupulous Brethren, at home.

Our care and concern therefore for its interests will be best seen by our conduct towards all these sort of men.

The first and most insolent enemy of all godliness is the modern UNBELIEVER, who now rears his head and walks openly abroad, under the more creditable appellation of *Freethinker*. He professes himself to be the bane of our *hopes*, in that only solid consolation of humanity, the *prospect of futurity*. Him therefore, and his notions, we should avoid, as *the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday*; but think no more of applying to the Magistrate to curb his insolence, while his only weapon is his wit, than we would solicit a civil edict against a pestilence.

The next enemy of our peace is the PAPIST. As the Unbeliever would shut up all the avenues to future felicity, so the Papist would shut up all but one; and have that in his own keeping, impervious to all who love truth, or have any reverence for common sense. The Freethinker would cajole us into misery and folly: the Papist would frighten us into it. The chief support of the Pope's tyrannic power was his usurped authority over Kings and Princes; and the fatal instruments of his rage, were those fanatic assassins still ready addressed to plunge the dagger

dagger into the bosom of those whom he has anathematized; so that the Legislature was necessitated to interpose with what these murderers miscal *sanguinary Laws*; the terror of which was not pointed at them as false Believers, but as Traitors and Rebels to their King and Country. And that it might be seen, the necessity was not pretended but real; and the object of their resentment, bad Citizens, and not mistaken Religionists, they have, from their very first enacting, been chiefly held out in terror; and never put in force but where the Recusant convict was at the same time a convict Traitor. And since the Bulls of Rome lost their power to frighten the People, or to mischieve the Sovereign, these *sanguinary Laws* have slept so profoundly, that the far greater part both of Protestants and Papists hardly know that any such are in being.

And may *they* sleep! but let the Guardians of the Law be still awake: for though Time, in its ceaseless revolutions, hath removed this danger from our Country, yet it hath brought in another; I mean the strong attachment of this sect to a Popish Pretender; whose absurd unnatural claim of governing a free People against their wills, can never succeed but by the destruction of those two capital Blessings, *Civil Liberty* and *pure Religion*; for whose sake (as I have shewn) an unmeriting People hath been taken under the most distinguished protection of Heaven.

A right conduct towards these Disturbers of mankind, a generous People will never be at a loss to understand.—While the Papist forbears to mix in civil factions, and aims at nothing but the liberty of

worshipping God in his own way, Protestant Charity will be always ready to connive at an indulgence to him which he will allow to no sect beside; and which he will not so much as attempt to *deserve*, by giving some reasonable security to the Civil Magistrate for his Obedience. But whenever we find the councils of Popery to tend to the disturbance of the State, either by enforcing the wicked claims of a Romish usurpation, or the absurd pretensions of a servile Pensioner of a Romish Court, then the duty of our great Trust requires us to awake the terrors of the Law against them, till we bring them back to the modest measures of a mere religious sect. And we should be the more watchful, as we are not ignorant of their devices; especially that stale trick of assuming every form of disguise; indifferent to them whether it be *infidelity* or *fanaticism*, further than as the prevailing fashion directs them to that which is the likeliest instrument of general mischief.

So far, my Brethren, with regard to these native foes of our happy Constitution.

No less degree of prudence, but much greater of lenity and indulgence, is to be practised towards those who are indeed, or would be thought, its friends.

A new species of Fanaticism has of late arisen within the bosom of the Church, and would fain be thought to belong to it, now known by the fantastic name of METHODISM. These men hold themselves clear of all blame, because they teach only the Doctrines of the established Church. What they say may be true, for aught I know. But it should be

considered by those whom this profession may delude, that the *manner of teaching* is often as injurious to truth and peace as the *matter of the Doctrine*; when the heat of zeal raises piety to frenzy; and the leven of bigotry sinks reason into nonsense.

Now, whether such enthusiastic ideas, as *a sudden and violent new birth—a divinity in our inward feelings*—and *a miraculous co-operation of the Deity with our outward labours*—Whether these, I say, have not a strong tendency to dishonour and discredit the dignity and sobriety of the *Faith, delivered to the saints*, We however, if they will not, shall do well to consider.

In the mean time it is our duty, as, on the one hand, to afford no encouragement to these irregularities, by being present in their assemblies, or giving countenance to their Leaders; so on the other, to forbear disturbing or vexing them, by taking advantage of any *legal defects* in their claim to the common rights of *Constitutional toleration*.

But still we should keep a watchful eye over *Fanaticism*; for it is of the nature of all sects founded in it, to be crouching and fawning to a Government vigilant and strong; but whenever it can be taken at advantage, busied on other objects, whether diverted by foreign Enemies, or weakened by domestic Factions, it is, I say, of the nature of such sects, to push the tottering fabric of Government from its basis, down that precipice on which it has been driven by its other adversaries. We have a dreadful illustration of this truth in the Fanatics of the last age, who, on their first appearance, under the name

of *Independents*, breathed nothing but peace, and full obedience to civil Power, though rising in professed opposition to the ecclesiastical. Yet public discord no sooner began to rage, than they joined with the most inveterate of the Factions, in the destruction both of Church and State.

I use this example for the extreme aptness of the comparison. For it is to be remembered, that when, in the revolutions of State, the Regicides came to take their turn at the scaffold and the gallows, their Friends took care to collect and publish their last spiritual meditations. Now in these there appears so wonderful a coincidence, both in the ideas and expression, with the journals of our *Methodists*, concerning *beatific visions*, *divine illuminations*, and *inward feelings*, that did we not know that the *language of Fanaticism* has, in all ages, been as steady, constant, and unchangeable, as much the same with itself, as the *language of reason* ever was, one might suspect this regicidal collection to be the spiritual breathings of an enlightened Methodist.

Lastly, With regard to our Brethren the Protestant sectaries of more ancient date, who from various accidents have long dissented from the established worship, and are now secured in their natural Rights by the fundamental Laws of the Constitution, we of the national Church should shew, by all brotherly acts of love and kindness, that the *Toleration* given them by the Laws does, in our sense, add honour to the Gospel, as well as strength and safety to a free Community. More especially should these dispositions be manifested to that sounder,

and

and far more considerable part of the Separation, the *Presbyterian*; as well for that these did not spring, like other of the wild sects, from Fanaticism, as because they differ from us rather in the form of *Discipline*, than in the more essential matters of the Christian Faith. As therefore we both profess to be under the same *Shepherd*, we should not, sure, make one another uneasy because we lodge in different *folds*; seeing we both hold, that a time will come when *all shall hear his voice, and there shall be one fold under one Shepherd.*

But now, when we have done all this, a harder task will still remain, the discharge of that duty which we owe to ourselves, as members of that mystical Body, the Church of Christ.—At the Reformation, we professed to regulate that part of it to which we belong, on the purity, and to contain it within the limits, of the GOSPEL. We should therefore discourage, at least by our neglect, all mixture of human Doctrines arising from the vanity of being *wise above what is written.* We should confine ourselves to Gospel-instruction, and be content with what the sacred Word plainly teacheth. This is the only sure barrier to all that bigotry, superstition, and Fanaticism, which have deformed those Sects and Churches, we have been necessitated to drive from us, or from whence we have been driven. The GOSPEL is our Pole-star, of which if we once lose sight, we shall be soon swallowed up in the boundless, unfathomable ocean of *Opinion.*

But then, as we should not *add* to the Gospel, we should be equally careful not to *take from it*, by explaining

explaining away (as is the mode) those fundamental Doctrines held out in almost every page, because our line of Reason may be too short to fathom them.

This is a short summary of the duties we owe, and which, Gratitude, on this occasion, calls upon us to pay, to our COUNTRY and our RELIGION, the two great sources of human felicity; and, on that account, so wonderfully guarded, as we have seen, by the wakeful eye of Providence.

This should stimulate us to Virtue with redoubled vigour, and give a double horror to the turpitude of Vice: for woe to the unhappy man, who *despiseth the riches of God's goodness; or knoweth not that this goodness leadeth him to repentance.*

Happy, indeed, is the state of that favoured People, whose return of gratitude for national blessings is perseverance in their virtuous course.

This, it must be owned with sorrow, is far from being our case. But let us not despond. A return to forsaken Virtue is not without its Triumphs; and our holy Religion informs us (what Reason would not dare to intimate) that they are Triumphs of the noblest kind—*I say unto you, that joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.* Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

THE FALL OF SATAN.

MATT. iv. 24.

AND THEY BROUGHT UNTO HIM ALL SICK PEOPLE THAT WERE TAKEN WITH DIVERS DISEASES AND TORMENTS, AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND THOSE WHICH WERE LUNATIC; AND HE HEALED THEM.

THIS is a clear and exact account of the nature of those disorders which found relief from the salutary hand of Jesus.

But we have been told of late, that what is here called, the being *possessed with Devils*, was indeed no other than an atrabilare Lunacy, or one of those *occult distempers*, for which Physicians could not find a *remedy*, or what was harder still, a *name*; and therefore, in complaisance to the imbecility of their Patients, agreed to deem it supernatural, or, if you please, the work of the Devil.

Of this superstitious fancy (they tell us) Jesus and his Disciples took advantage, in order to impress a religious horror on their followers.

This

This is boldly said; and were it as well proved, we should soon see how laudably these men had employed their pains.

In the mean time, as the agency of Satan, recorded in Scripture, is of high importance to illustrate the truth of the Gospel in general, the matter will be well worth a careful inquiry.

But here it may be proper to observe, that my business, at present, is only with Believers. The negative of the Proposition in question was first started by a true Believer; and has been ever since supported, when it has been supported with sobriety, by men professing the Faith of Jesus. These, as well as we, who adhere to the plain literal sense, go upon one common principle, that the Gospel History is true, and of divine inspiration. What is sought for by both of us, is the true meaning of *Demoniacs*. Nay, we not only go upon one common principle, but profess to pursue one common end, namely, the support of the credibility of Gospel-History. On which account, all that is here urged in favour of the literal sense stands upon the acknowledged truth of Scripture.—In proving the reality of the *Gospel Demoniacs* to Unbelievers, a different sort of argumentation is to be employed. But with professed Unbelievers we have, at present, nothing to do; unless it be to bespeak their attention to a theologic argument, alone sufficient (amongst a thousand others) to impress upon them a very striking sense of the beauty of this part of God's moral Dispensation.

Now, to form a right judgment of the matter in question,

question, Believers should first of all consider, what part the *Devil* bore in the *Economy of Grace.*

In the history of the *Fall*, to which the writers of the New Testament perpetually allude, *Satan*, or the *Tempter*, the *Calumniator*, or the *Evil-one*, (for by all these names he is designed in Sacred Scripture) is represented as instigating the first Man to disobedience; for which his punishment by the *second Adam*, who restored man to his lost inheritance, is, at the time of the fall, denounced in the terms of *bruising his head by the seed of the woman.*

When, therefore, this restoration was procured by the death of Christ, we may reasonably expect to find that punishment on the *Tempter*, which was predicted in the history of the *Fall*, recorded in the history of the restoration. And so, indeed, we do; and on many notable occasions. When the Disciples, whom Jesus had sent out, come back exulting in the success of their Ministry, the effect of those supernatural powers with which he had intrusted them, He receives them as Conquerors returning in triumph from their holy warfare.—*I beheld Satan* (says he) *as lightning fall from Heaven**. A strong and lively picture of the sudden precipitation of that *Prince of the Air*, where he had so long held his Empire, and hung like a pestilential meteor over the sons of men.

The *rise of Christ's kingdom*, therefore, and the *fall of Satan*'s, being thus carried on together, it would be strange, indeed, could we find in this history no marks of the rage of his expiring Tyranny,

* Luke x. 18.

amidst

amidst all the salutary blessings of the rising Empire of Christ. But we see them in abundance.—We see this enemy of our salvation mad with despair, invoking all the powers of Hell to his assistance, to blast that *peace and good-will towards men*, proclaimed by Angels on the gracious birth-night of the Son of God. For when he understood, from his baffled attempts upon his Lord and Master *, that the *souls* of men had escaped his dominion, he turned the exercise of his cruelty on their *bodies*, in the most humbling circumstances of pain and oppression that could dishonour and disgrace humanity: permitted, no doubt, to range wider at this critical season, than at any time before or since, in order to manifest the Triumphs and Glories of his Conqueror.

Had the *first Adam* stood in the rectitude of his Creation, he had been immortal; and beyond the reach of natural and moral evil. His fall to mortality brought both into the World. The office of the *second Adam* was to restore us to that happy state. But as the *Immortality* purchased for us by the Son of God, was not, like that forfeited by Adam, to commence in this world; but is reserved for the reward of the next, both *physical* and *moral evil* were to endure for a season. Yet, to manifest that they were, indeed, to receive their final doom from the REDEEMER, it was but fit that, in the course of his Ministry, he should give a *specimen* of his power over them. One part, therefore, of his Godlike labours was taken up in curing all

* Luke, chap. iv.

kinds

kinds of *natural diseases*. But had he stopped here, in the midst of his victories over *physical evil*, the proof of his Dominion over both Worlds had remained defective: just as, at the conclusion of his Ministry, the truth of the restoration to *life and immortality* was made manifest by *his own Resurrection:* without which there had been something wanting to the full evidence of this important truth: He was therefore to display his Sovereignty over *moral evil* likewise. And this could not be clearly evinced, as it was, over *natural evil*, but by a sensible victory over SATAN; through whose temptation, *moral evil* was brought into the world; and by whose wiles and malice, it was sustained and increased. Hence it was, that, amongst his amazing works of sanity and salvation, the CASTING OUT OF DEVILS is so much insisted on by the Historians of his life and actions. For He had informed them that this was one of the essential exploits in the erection of his spiritual Kingdom. *If* (said he) *I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God,* THEN *the Kingdom of God is come unto you**.

Thus, from the very genius of the GOSPEL, from the nature and constitution of the system of GRACE, it appears that this was a *real ejection of the Evil Spirit*.

But, besides this, Jesus and his Disciples, in their *manner* of working, and in their *mode* of recording what they worked, did every thing which might best display a real victory over *Satan*.

Let the *Jews* of that time, let the *Diseased* them-

* Matt. xii. 28.

selves,

selves, be as much mistaken as we can suppose them to be, concerning *diabolic possessions*; yet no Believer will presume to say, that *Jesus was mistaken in his own case*, when he acquainted his Historians with the circumstance of his being *led by the Spirit into the Wilderness, and forty days tempted of the Devil**. Whether any, or what part of this transaction passed in *Vision*, is not material to inquire; since the *reality of the agency* is the same, on either supposition; as depending, not on the mode of sensation, but on the certain knowledge of the operation. For Jesus, with all his humility in assuming our nature, was certainly not subject to those infirmities of it, which arise from the delusions of sense; especially in a matter which so essentially concerned his Ministry. If, therefore, there were any mistake in this matter, it must be (I speak it with horror) by the designed contrivance of Jesus himself: and how inconsistent that was with the character of him, who tells us, he was not only the *life*, but the *truth*†, will be shewn hereafter more at large.

So far then is clear, That the *Evil Spirit* was neither absent nor inactive when the Evangelic Mission was first opened.

In the TEMPTATION he was permitted to try whether he could traverse the great work of human Redemption.—In the POSSESSION of the bodies of men, he seems to have been, in part, forced upon the employment; as the *casting* him *out* by divine power gave glory to God, and bore testimony to the

* Luke iv. 1, 2. † John xiv. 6.

ministry

ministry of Christ. Thus, in the case of the *Demoniac*, in the country of the Gadarenes. The Devils oppressed by the mighty hand of Jesus, and ready to be cast out, and sent into a place of torment, confess the power of their Conqueror, and proclaim him to be the PROMISED MESSIAH; at a time when he concealed his Character; and was not certainly known by it, even to his Disciples. If it be asked, *Why they did it?* The answer is easy —To embarrass and impede his Ministry. On this account Jesus checks them, and commands them to be silent. I confess, indeed, that had all the attestation given by Jesus to *real possessions*, been such as his answer to those who said he *cast out devils by Baalzebub*—"that then Baalzebub's kingdom being divided against itself, could not stand"—our conclusion for real Demoniacs would want much of its force, for then he might reasonably be supposed to argue only *ad homines*, which a messenger of God might do, though not strictly conformable to the truth of things. But when a man commands the Devils, whom he pretends to cast out, *not to discover him*, the going such a length, if there were no Devil in the case, is the adventure only of an Impostor. Yet, from our not reflecting that this enemy of mankind, whether he strove to impede, or was forced to promote, the progress of the Gospel, was equally in the hands of his Maker, have arisen many of the late unweighed objections to the reality of *demoniacal possessions*.

If we turn from Satan's wily temptation of Jesus, to his cruel treatment of the Jews, we shall

find the same strong marks of *real agency*. Be it, that both Jews and Gentiles were very superstitious on this head; and, that they often mistook *natural* disorders for *demoniacal*—What follows, but that, which we here find provided, against the false conclusions deduced from it? that is to say, greater attention of the sacred Writers in marking those cases of *possession* which Jesus relieved, by some circumstance not equivocal; and what could never accompany an imaginary disorder.

Thus, in the adventure recorded by three of the Evangelists*; when Jesus had relieved the Demoniac, and his Tormentors had obtained leave to go into a *herd of swine*, What other reason can be given (or indeed what better can be conceived) of this extraordinary request, than that it was to afford a certain mark of distinction between a *real* and an *imaginary possession?* Be it allowed, that the wild creative power of human fancy is able to raise up chimeras that shall affright its owner to distraction: Yet still it must be owned, that Brutes are endowed with no such dangerous faculty: And therefore when we find great numbers of them, all at once, stimulated to an instantaneous madness, we must needs conclude, that the cause was some superior Agent operating upon their frame.

So admirably hath our indulgent Master been pleased to guard this important truth against the most plausible evasions of self-conceited Men. The strong impulse of a vitiated Imagination, pushed forward by Superstition, might be supposed capable,

* Matt. viii. Mark v. Luke viii.

without

without any other agency, of producing these very extraordinary appearances. To cut off all escape from a forced confession of the mighty hand of Heaven, here are two cases obtruded on the Incredulous; one, of Satan's *temptation* of the Son of God; another, of his *possession* of brute animals; in neither of which, can the power of the Imagination have any place. In the first, the divine Patient was above its delusions; in the other, the brute as much below it.

If we now proceed, from the *Facts* which the Evangelists have recorded, to the *Expressions* which they have employed, we shall have further reason to rest satisfied in the common interpretation.

My text says---*And they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments,* AND THOSE WHICH WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS, AND THOSE WHICH WERE LUNATIC, *and he healed them.* Here we see, that the disorder of those who were said to be *possessed with devils* is precisely distinguished, not only from natural *diseases* and *torments* in general, but likewise from *Lunacy* in particular; that very disorder which the Anti-demonianist is so desirous of confounding with supernatural agitations. Is it possible, therefore, to suppose, that a writer of any meaning, should, at the very time he is distinguishing between *Lunacy* and *possession with Devils,* should, I say, confound them with one another? And yet this is what our Critics make him do; in compliance, they tell us, with an accustomed mode of speech. Is it not plain, on the contrary, that

the sacred writer was the more intent to represent them as two different disorders, because they had many symptoms in common: a circumstance which makes our critics as ready to confound them with one another, as the Evangelists were careful to distinguish them.

In a word, they who, after all these precautions taken by the sacred Penmen, can think that *Devils* and *Demoniacs* were used in Scripture only as terms of *accommodation* to Jewish prejudices, may well believe (as some of them tell us, they do) that the terms, *Redemption*, *Sacrifice*, and *Satisfaction*, come of no better a house than one of the common figures of Speech.

My serious Readers will be now ready to ask, What learned discoveries they are, which have encouraged these men to innovate from the commonly received opinion concerning the *Gospel-Demoniacs*? Hath any thing been found, in the Scripture-history of them, either absurd in morals, or false in physics? Nothing of either; as may be seen by what hath been just hinted, in the entrance on this discourse.

And yet, whatever the Discoveries are, these men are none of the Discoverers. An excellent Divine of the last age had in his extensive searches into antiquity collected, that both Jews and Gentiles, at and before the time of Christ, were overrun with one common superstition, that Demons, and the Souls of wicked men deceased, frequently seized upon the bodies of the living, and tormented them in various ways. Hence he too hastily, though with

his usual modesty, insinuated, that the *Possessions* recorded in the Gospel, might be of that imaginary sort; and no other than *occult diseases*; which, being unmanageable by the Physician, were concluded to be *supernatural:* as if a good Physician could deal with any thing but the Devil: that to these unhappy wretches Jesus applied his salutary hands; and gave to their disorder the fashionable name by which it was at that time distinguished.

Without doubt, this truly learned Divine went the more easily into this bold opinion, as he had observed it to be God's gracious method, in the course of his revealed Dispensations, to take advantage of men's habitual prejudices, to support his truth, and keep his People attached to his Ordinances.

But here, the excellent person should have distinguished (as his followers * were not likely to do it for him) between *Rites* and *Doctrines*. They were the *Rites* only of which God availed himself, for the benefit of his servants, in order to combat or to elude their fondness for Pagan usages. In matters of *Doctrine*, the like compliance could not be indulged to them without violating material Truths; and therefore Scripture affords us no example of such a condescension. In things only pertaining to *Rites*, we have indeed, numerous instances. Thus, the use of linen garments, lighted lamps, lustrations, and a multitude of other things in themselves indifferent, were brought from *false* Religions into the *true:* and with high propriety and wisdom, where

* Dr. Sykes, Dr. Lardner, &c.

their new designation sanctified their use, and their use contributed to the better establishment of the Dispensation. On the other hand, to assert and support a false and superstitious opinion (if such it were) concerning *diabolic possessions*, was infecting and contaminating the purity of the Christian Faith.

But if the admirable Author of this groundless novelty did himself miss of so just and obvious a distinction, we have the less reason to wonder that those of his followers, who aimed only at a name by a faint reflection from the other's learning, should not hit upon what their master had overlooked.

A late eminent Physician, who hath espoused this system, acted a more decent and becoming part. He might pretend by virtue of his profession, and still more by his skill in it, to a profounder insight into *Nature*: and *Theology* being in another department, he was the less censurable if he did not see all that this divine science opposed to his opinion; an opinion which might be said to descend to him by inheritance from his great namesake *, and Relation: Whose conciseness, strength, and modesty of reasoning, he has so well followed, that to confute his objections will be to overthrow the whole system of the anti-demoniac party.

*—Ut redeam autem ad dæmoniacos; non mea est profecto, sed aliorum ante me pictate et doctrina præstantium virorum sententia, quam hic propono. Et proximo quidem sæculo inter nostrates etiam JOSEPHUS MEADUS, theologus rerum sacrarum cognitione, nulli secundus, luculenta Dissertatione eam propugnavit. Cum ex eadem ig tur ac ille familia sim oriundus, &c. Præf. in Med. Sacr p. ix. Authore Richardo Mead.

In

In his *Medica Sacra*, he hath a chapter *de dæmoniacis*; in which he hath treated the Evangelic history with all that reverence which becomes a serious Believer and a true Scholar.

The first observation I shall make, on my entrance on his Argument, is general, and will suit all who have written on this side the question. It is this—They reason upon the case of *Demoniacs*, not as it is recorded by the Evangelists, but as if described only in a treatise of Medicine by Aretæus, Fernelius, or any other of the Faculty; where it stands unconnected with all moral as well as religious ideas. Whereas I have shewn at large that these *demoniacal possessions* have an intimate relation to the doctrine of *Redemption*; and were therefore reasonably to be expected at the promulgation of the Gospel. This sets the matter on quite another footing; and that plausibility which the learned person's representation gives to his arguments entirely disappears, when we put the case as it really was.

1. This necessary caution, against so defective and foreign a representation, being premised, I now proceed to the reasoning itself which the learned Physician employs to discredit the common opinion of *real possessions*. His first argument rises from the extent of the superstition concerning *imaginary ones*. "It had not only infected the Mosaic Religion in particular, but had overrun Paganism in general*." "And

* —At non Judæis tantum, sed et aliis etiam gentibus in usu fuit insanos pro dæmoniacis habere. p. 76.—

" And as to the Jews, who were wont to ascribe whatever there was of prodigious in nature to the ministry of ANGELS, they were easily brought to believe, that those dire diseases which infected the mind and body equally, and whose causes were unknown, could be no other than the work of the Devil *."

Allow all this. Allow that the Jews, at the time of Christ, were very superstitious, yet the learned Doctor, in his turn, must allow that the inspired Teachers of the Gospel were free from an error which so fatally affected the Religion they were intrusted to propagate, as *Demonianism* did, if it were an error. They, therefore, knowingly, gave it countenance and support. But how that will agree with their character and office, we shall see, as we go along.

Our learned writer tells us further, " that the Jews not only gave credit to the works of the Devil, but believed in the *ministry of* ANGELS likewise."—This seems to be one of those slips of the pen to which Truth sometimes exposes those who write most cautiously against her. For, the

Old

A Chaldæis quidem ad Phœnices, postea ad Ægyptios propagata, ad Græcos deinde, hinc ad Romanos, aliasque demum gentes temporis progressu Dæmoniaca ista Religio pervenit. P. 74.

* P. 74. Judæi autem, siquid miri faceret natura, ad ANGELORUM *supremi Dei ministrorum* operam referre soliti, facile in animum sibi inducere poterant, ut diras quasdam crederent ægritudines, quæ mentem simul et corpus læderent, et quarum causas cognoscere nequirent, ab angelorum malorum *ἐνεργείαις* exoriri.

Old Testament, which the learned Doctor reverences equally with the new, bears ample testimony to the *real ministry of Angels*; and with such circumstances as will not admit a caviller to have recourse to vision, figure, or *accommodation:* for if the *Angel* who waylaid Balaam may be reduced to a nocturnal Shadow, those whom Abraham entertained in broad daylight were substantial Beings. When, therefore, the learned person puts the ministry of good and evil Angels on the same footing, he must allow, if the *reality* of the former be proved, that the reality of the latter follows of course.

As to the universality of the superstition, both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, I do not see how that, in the least, alters the case. The Jews of this time, by a more unrestrained commerce with the Gentiles, had vitiated the purity of their holy Religion, by many doctrines borrowed from the Pagan Philosophers. Thus they took (we will suppose) the *Doctrine of Demons* from Plato; and the *Doctrine of the pre-existence and a future state* from Pythagoras. Nevertheless, it is certain, that both *demoniacal possessions* and a *future state* were equally supported by the acts and predication of Jesus and his Disciples. And this let me observe further, These two doctrines are equally woven (as may appear from what hath been said above) into the substance of the Christian Faith; the doctrines of the FALL and of the REDEMPTION being the two cardinal hinges on which our holy Religion turns. If therefore we can suppose *Demonianism* to be only an old threadbare fable new dressed; and offered by

by way of *accommodation* to amuse the Followers of the Gospel; I do not see what can hinder us from supposing, with Synesius, the same of a *future state* likewise. Both doctrines had the advantage of old prejudice in their favour. Yet, if but one were *true* (namely, that of a future state) and the other of Demonianism only taught by way of *accommodation*, it could proceed only from the difficulty of erasing it from the popular belief. But so uncomfortable a doctrine is erased with very little difficulty.

It may be said perhaps, "that the two Doctrines, which I put upon the same footing of credibility, because the Gospel hath so put them, differ in this, that a *future state* may be proved by natural Reason, which a *Demoniacal possession* cannot." What doth this Objection infer? no more than this, that a *future state* makes a part of Natural Religion, and *Demoniacal possessions* a part only of the Revealed.

2. The ingenious Discourser brings another argument against *demoniacal possessions*.—Having collected together all the symptoms of this disorder from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he concludes thus —"All these are the symptoms of a natural distemper. They are more surprizing indeed than those of other disorders, yet nothing supernatural*." His learned Fellow-Collegiate, Dr. JOHN FREIND,

* Insanorum sunt hæc omnia; utrum vero à Dæmoniis, an vi morbi provenerint, disceptatur.——Neque enim alius quisquam inter omnes, qui humanum genus infestant, morbus, tam naturæ vim excedere videtur.—P. 66.

treating

treating the same subject, after having given, from Ætius and Oribasius, a description of the madness called *Lycanthropy*, of which one of the most striking symptoms was, *to wander amongst the sepulchres of the dead*, adds, the *Demoniac in the Scriptures, who was* POSSESSED WITH A LIKE SORT OF MADNESS, *is represented as having his dwelling amongst the tombs* *.—

The DETERMINATION of these two learned Naturalists is founded, we see, in this circumstance, "that the symptoms of a demoniacal possession are the same with those in some natural disorders."—Now if an evil Spirit were permitted to disturb men's vital functions, whether in the solids, the fluids, or in both, Have we any conception how this could be done, without occasioning some or other of the symptoms which accompany natural diseases? A circumstance, therefore, which must always attend *Demoniacal possessions*, if real, can never, surely, be turned into an argument for the falsehood of them.

Let me just observe, that one of the Evangelists being a Physician, he is, by a very becoming partiality, preferred, by Dr. FREIND, to the rest, for the *purity* and *accuracy* of his expression, *when there is occasion to speak of distempers, or the cure of them*; and that he *is more particular in reciting all the miracles of our Saviour in relation to healing, than the other Evangelists are* †. Yet St. Luke speaks the very same language concerning *Demo-*

* History of Physic, Part I. p. 18—21.

† Ibid. p. 223—225.

niacal

niacal possessions with the rest. Now, if the Gospel Demoniacs were men only naturally diseased, a Physician, by his deeper inspection into Nature, with the advantage of inspiration to boot, was very likely to have discovered it; and, for the glory of his art, as likely to have undeceived the superstitious vulgar; these benevolent Practitioners being at all times ready to detect *vulgar errors*. Not to insist, that St. Luke was swayed to this good work by a stronger passion than the honour of his profession as a Physician, it was by the love of truth, as an Evangelist.

The learned author of the *Medica Sacra* then goes on to shew, what he before hinted at, that the *Demoniacs* were affected with no symptoms but what might arise from a diseased body; which he endeavours to prove from the nature of maniacal disorders *.

This Observation seems to have arisen from the learned Writer's unwarily confounding Gospel Demonianism with the pretended *possessions* of these later times. We Protestants urge the *testimony of the Gospel* to prove the truth of Demoniacal possessions: the Papists bring the testimony of their *Demoniacs* to prove the truth of the Gospel, or rather of their own Church. In the first case, nothing is wanting to evince the reality of the fact, but the declaration of the great Physician of our souls: in the other, it is necessary to shew that the symptoms accompanying the *possession* were SUPER-

* P. 66.—Nihil profectò hic sacrum, nihil, quod ex male affecta corporis sanitate oriri non possit, reperimus.

NATURAL;

NATURAL; such as, speaking in unknown tongues, revealing secrets, foretelling future events, and all those extraordinary appearances which the Writers on Demonology lay down for distinguishing true from pretended *possessions*. So that it appears, this objection hath no force against any but these *Church Demoniacs*.

Having thus seen what these men have to urge against *our* system of the Gospel; let us now see what we have to urge against *theirs*. Enough hath been said to shew that this is no trifling or unimportant question.

I shall therefore beg leave to lay before you, the consequences which naturally follow the concession, that Jesus and his Disciples did, in this, only *accommodate* themselves to the fanciful, and therefore (as it concerned Religion) the superstitious opinions of those times, in placing natural distempers in the visionary class of supernatural, and calling real Lunatics, *Demoniacs*.

UNBELIEVERS may think (and, by too many, they will be supposed not to think amiss) that they get great advantage over the Evidences of our Faith, by this concession.—While it is believed that evil Demons were subject to the power of Christ from the testimony of the Evangelists, who tell us that *he cast out Devils, and healed those possessed with them*, that plausible subterfuge against his miraculous cures, which supposes the relief afforded to be the effect of a STRONG IMAGINATION, is entirely cut off. For, however the motion of the blood and spirits

spirits might be accelerated by the agitations of a mind thus unhinged; the Devil would still keep his hold, and be nowise affected by it. But when once his agency is removed, as a groundless and superstitious terror, these men will think themselves not altogether unable to deal with the miraculous cures of the Gospel on our own principles. They will recount to us the astonishing effects of the Imagination in pregnant women, and in atrabilare and melancholy subjects; supported by cases recorded in the writings of Physicians of the greatest authority and credit*. They will remind us of the cures worked by *Greatrix the Stroker*, in the memory of our Fathers; and of those performed at *the Tomb of Abbé Paris*, in our own. They will tell us of a learned French Physician †, who was so struck with this astonishing force of the human Imagination, that he thought it capable of *working Miracles*, or affecting things supernatural. Nay, they will pretend to account for all this, by the mechanism of the body, unaccountably subject to the delusions of the mind, when unduly agitated either by sensation or reflection. Nor has any one borne a stronger testimony ‡ to these amazing delusions than

* See Fienus *de viribus Imaginationis.*

† Augerius Ferrerius. Of whom Thuanus says,—Medicinam professus, quam et felicissimè et summo judicio fecit. Hist. Lib. LXXXIX.

‡ Quid mirabilius iis, quæ in Graviditatibus non raro contingere videmus? Fœmina in utero gestans, si forte quid appetiverit, et frustra sit, interdum rei concupitæ figuram quandam, aut similitudinem, in hac aut illa corporis

than the learned person whose objections to the *Gospel Demoniacs* we have just now examined: which may seem the more strange, as the testimony is borne by one who, at the same time, expresses his surprise that Divines should contend so eagerly for this triumph of Christ over Demons, as if something were wanting to demonstrate his power, when exercised only over natural diseases *. Without doubt,

poris parte, fœtui suo imprimit. Imo, quod majus est, et prodigii instar, subita partis alicujus læsione perterrita matre, ipsa illa pars in infante noxam sentit, et nutrimenti defectu marcessit. Scio hujusmodi omnes historias à medicis nonnullis, quoniam, qui talia fieri possint, haud percipiunt, in dubium vocari. At multa, quæ ipse vidi, exempla mihi hac in re scrupulum omnem ademerunt. Tam stupenda autem est facultatis imaginandi vis, ut non minus falsæ quam veræ imagines afficiant, ubi mens iis assidue sit addicta. Id enim in mulieribus, quæ sagæ dicuntur, usu comperimus, quæ consimili mentis errore captæ, cum Dæmonibus non tantum consuetudinem habere, sed et pacta cum iis se inivisse, sæpe imaginantur; idque animo adeo obstinato, ut etiam in judicium vocatæ, se facinorum quæ nunquam perpetraverint, reas confiteantur, cum ob ea ipsa jam mortis supplicium subituræ sint. Proinde omnibus notum est, quam mirabilibus modis in melancholicis mens perturbatur, &c.—Pp. 70—72.

* P. vii. Præf. Sæpe quidem mirari solco, cur fidei nostræ Antistites Dæmonas in scenam producere tantopere contendant, quo scilicet divinum Christi numen de victis hisce infernis hostibus triumphos agat. An divinam Christi virtutem gravissimorum morborum sanationes, jussu illius momento temporis peractæ, minus patefaciunt; quam malorum Geniorum ex hominum corporibus expulsiones?—

doubt, Divines may contend for it on that principle, without being laughed at. And I have written to little purpose, if this discourse does not prove that something would have been wanting to demonstrate, if not the power, yet the assumed character of Jesus, had it been exercised only over natural diseases. So that it appeared to me that what they contended for was highly useful; to cut off a subterfuge to which Unbelievers have had recourse, and which this learned Physician's just account of the *force of the Imagination* contributes to support. How pertinent the inference may be, which Unbelievers draw from this *force of the Imagination*, it is not my purpose, at present to inquire. The mischief to Religion is not inconsiderable, that diseased Nature hath afforded these PHILOSOPHERS a handle for any inference at all.

But this is not the worst. There is an unavoidable inference to be drawn from this anti-demoniac system when proved, more fatal to the truth of the Gospel than that other. It is an unquestioned fact, that the Evangelic History of the *Demoniacs* hath given occasion to the most scandalous frauds, and sottish superstitions, throughout almost every age of the Church; the whole trade of Exorcisms, accompanied with all the mummery of frantic and fanatic agitations, having arisen from thence.

Now, were the *Gospel Demoniacs really possessed*, the honour of Religion is safe; and no more affected by these ingrafted frauds and follies of the Church of Rome, than is the Law of Moses by their Inquisitorial Murders, committed under cover of God's penal

penal Statutes against Jewish Idolaters. If men will turn the Truths of God to the support of their crimes and follies; the sacred Oracles will receive no attaint from such their malice and perversity.

But were the *Possessions*, recorded in the Gospel, imaginary; and *Demoniacs* only a name for the naturally diseased; and that yet, Jesus and his Apostles, instead of rectifying the People's follies and superstitions on this head, chose rather to inflame them, by assuring certain of the distempered that they were really *possessed by evil Spirits* over whom the name of Christ had power and authority*: if this, I say, were the case, I should tremble for the consequence: for then would Jesus and his Disciples, who were sent to propagate the TRUTH, appear to be answerable for all the mischief, which the rivetting of this superstition in the minds of men, produced in after-ages: for there is not a clearer conclusion in moral science, than that He, who commits a premeditated fraud, is answerable for the evil which necessarily or naturally proceedeth from it. So little did the learned Physician, with whom we have to do, see into the Casuistry of this question, when he took it for granted, that our contending for the reality of *demoniacal possessions* makes the Gospel, and us, its Ministers who thus interpret it, answerable for all the tricks of the Church of Rome, which rise upon the avowal of it †.

On

* Matt. xvii. 15.

† Præf. p. iv. Erroris patrocinio non indiget veritas, uti nec vultus natura nitidus fucum requirit. Et certum est, opinionem istam, quæ jam per multa sæcula invaluit,

On the contrary, from what hath been here said, it evidently appears, that the Opinion of the *Accommodators* (who suppose Jesus and his Disciples took advantage of a favourable superstition), and not the Opinion of those Divines who hold Gospel-Demonianism to be real, is the very thing which brings this *opprobrium* on the first Propagators of our holy Faith.

Nor can that reason which is sometimes given for permitting superstitious errors, (although this were, which it is not, of the number of such as might be suffered to hold their course) have any weight in this case; namely, *the difficulty or danger in eradicating them.*

Danger there could be none, from the nature of things. For, to remove the false terrors concerning this Enemy of mankind, could never indispose men to embrace their Saviour and Redeemer.

As little *difficult* had it been to eradicate so pernicious an error, how deeply soever rooted, in the popular superstition. For when they saw Jesus cure all diseases with a word, and the *pretended Demoniac* as

de potentia ad corpora mentesque humanas vexandas dæmonibus adhuc permissa, variis astutorum hominum præstigiis, cum maximo rei Christianæ damno et *opprobrio* ansam præbuisse. Quis non merito irridet solennes istus Romæ pontificum ritus, quibus excitantur, ut loqui amant, Dæmoniaci.—Verum istæ præstigiæ, quantumvis oculis et mentibus ignaræ plebis illudant; paulo tamen sagaciores non modo offendunt, sed revera ipsis nocent. Hi enim, dolo perspecto, ad impietatem proni ducuntur.—

as easily as the rest, nothing could withstand the authority which informed them of their mistake; and assured them that this *demonianism*, like the rest, was altogether a natural distemper. On the contrary, many favourable prejudices would soon arise on the side of so authentic an Instructor.

From the whole, therefore, of what hath been here offered in favour of the obvious sense of my Text, the attentive hearer will, I presume, be inclined to acquiesce in the antient interpretation of this part of the Gospel-History; and be ready to agree with the first Disciples of Christ, in their pious exultation, when they *returned*, from their Mission, *with joy*; *saying*, *Lord, through thy name, even the* DEVILS *are subject unto us**.

* Luke x. 17.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.

2 PETER i. 16—21.

WE HAVE NOT FOLLOWED CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLES, WHEN WE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU THE POWER AND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BUT WERE EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.

FOR HE RECEIVED FROM GOD THE FATHER HONOUR AND GLORY, WHEN THERE CAME SUCH A VOICE TO HIM FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.

AND THIS VOICE WHICH CAME FROM HEAVEN WE HEARD, WHEN WE WERE WITH HIM IN THE HOLY MOUNT.

WE HAVE ALSO A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS:

KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.

FOR THE PROPHECY CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

THERE are few places in the New Testament plainer than this; as containing only matter of admonition and instruction: and yet there are none which have occasioned more contest, or greater variety of interpretation *.

This hath been chiefly owing to a mistake held in common concerning the Apostle's subject; namely, that he is here speaking of the *personal Character* of Jesus; and consequently, that the MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, with which he strengthens his argument, is the Prophecies of the Old Testament, establishing that character: Whereas the subject, he is upon, is very different, viz. *the general truth of the Gospel*; and, consequently, the *more sure word of Prophecy* is the Prophecies of the New Testament.

Such a mistake was necessarily productive of another; For if the *personal Character* of Jesus were the subject of the discourse, it would follow, that *the* POWER AND COMING *of our Lord*—is to be understood of his FIRST COMING; and that the *word of Prophecy* refers to a Prophecy already fulfilled. But if here he be speaking of the SECOND COMING of *Jesus*; and that, consequently, the *word of Prophecy* refers to a long series of events to be fulfilled; this puts a fair end to a controversy, supported only

* See the writings of Bishop Sherlock and Dr. Middleton, and their respective followers, on this subject.

by

by the absurd and embarrassed reasonings of the Controversialists.

1. First then, it is to be observed, that the Epistle from whence the passage in question is taken, is a farewell Epistle to the Churches: The writer *knowing* (as he tells them *) *that shortly he must put off this his Tabernacle.* Now the great topic of consolation urged by these departing Saints to the widowed Churches, was the SECOND COMING of their Lord and Master. And of this *coming* it is that St. Peter speaks,—*for we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the* POWER AND COMING *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He subjoins the reason of his confidence in this SECOND COMING, that he, and the rest of the Disciples, had been *eye-witnesses of the* MAJESTY of the FIRST.

This appears still plainer, from the recapitulation, in the concluding part of the Epistle, where he reproves those *Scoffers of the last days,* who would *say, Where is the promise of his* COMING? *for since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were* †. For the primitive Christians had entertained an Opinion ‡, that the SECOND COMING of their Master was at hand. These *Scoffers,* therefore, the Apostle confutes at large, from the fifth to the thirteenth verse of this last Chapter §.

If

* Chap. i. ver. 14. † Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4.

‡ See Div. Leg. Book VI. § 6.

§ But not only the general subject of the Epistle, but the expression used in the text, shews, that this *power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* is to be understood

If this account of the Epistle be true, then, by the MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY must needs be meant, not *Prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled*; but a long series of *Prophecies to be fulfilled under the New*, each in its order, and extending through a course of many Ages. To these, the Churches are bid *to take heed*, as to a *more sure word*; which the Apostle compares *unto a light that shineth*

of his SECOND COMING—*for we have not followed* (says he) CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLES, *when we made known unto you the power and coming*, &c. Now a simple attestation of *a voice from Heaven* at his FIRST COMING, could with no propriety of speech be called *a cunningly-devised fable*. But let us suppose the Apostle to speak of Christ's SECOND COMING, when, *according to the* PROMISE, *there was to be a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein was to dwell righteousness, after the old had been burnt up and destroyed by fervent heat* *; and then, if the prediction of this awful scene were an invention, it was truly characterized by a CUNNINGLY-DEVISED FABLE, such as those in which Paganism abounded; where, in their MYTHOLOGIC stories, they speak of the Regions of departed heroes, &c.

——" Locos lætos & amœna vireta
" Fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
" *Lagior* hic campos *æther* & *lumine* vestit
" *Purpureo: solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.*

And to ascertain his meaning, the Apostle uses a phrase, by which only the *mythologic* theology of Paganism can be designed,—*not following or imitating the cunningly-devised fables of the Greek sophists and mythologists* †.

* Chap. iii. ver. 12, 13, compared with the description in chapters xxi and xxii of the Apocalypse.

† Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις ΜΥΘΟΙΣ ἐξακολουθήσαντες.——

shineth IN A DARK PLACE, *until the day dawn, and the day-star should arise in their hearts.*

From *Prophecy*, thus circumstanced, we see, it could not be a Prophecy of the Old Testament fulfilled, such as that of Isaiah* ; which a late critic † supposes to be the thing here meant ; but a Prophecy of the New, because this Prophecy was not *a light shining in a dark place*, but in the *day*, and a day far advanced ; yet the Apostle supposes the *darkness* to prevail all round the *light* he speaks of, and the *dawn* to be at a great distance.

But then, on the other hand, neither could it be a Prophecy of things altogether future, since such Prophecies are totally *dark* and unintelligible : yet this is a *light*, although *a light shining in a dark place*.

But, if neither one nor the other, What is it then? To understand this, we must reflect upon the general subject of the *farewell* Epistle. It contains directions for their practice, and consolations to their Faith. Accordingly, having planned out the whole edifice of Christian Faith and Morals in that famous summary delivered in the fifth, sixth, and seventh verses of this Chapter; and recommended it by a variety of exhortations and encouragements, he supports himself in all he had said, by the noble consciousness of not having *followed cunningly-devised*

* Chap. xlii. ver. 1. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

† Mr. Markland.

fables,

fables, when, for their consolation, he had said so much of the SECOND *coming* of their Lord and Saviour; of which he could with the greater confidence speak, as he was an eye-witness of the *miraculous* circumstances which ushered in the FIRST, when Jesus *received from God the Father honour and glory*, in the *voice* from Heaven at his baptism * and on the mount †. "But besides these *miracles* attendant on his FIRST *coming*, which give credit to the truth of what he said concerning his SECOND, *we have* (says he) a still further confirmation, IN THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY."

Thus he proves invincibly, that nothing was wanting to satisfy men in this important point. It had all the evidence of MIRACLES and PROPHECY, the two great supports of Revelation; and graciously given to establish our faith in the Divine Author of it.

The ground of this extreme goodness is apparent. In the first promulgation of a revealed Religion, there is a necessity for the attestation of MIRACLES, because nothing but the seal of that testimony can assure us that it came from God. But when once this end is served, *Miracles* are withdrawn from his Church. It hath, from thenceforth, only the *traditional* verification of the Evidence of a past Fact; Evidence, in its nature, much weaker than the original Record; of which the first Ages of the Church were in possession.

Our gracious Lord, therefore, who *never leaves himself without a Witness*, in the *moral* govern-

* Matt. iii. 17. † Chap. xvii. ver. 5.

ment

ment of the world, any more than in the *physical*, hath been pleased to give to these latter ages, an equivalent for the MIRACLES of the former, in an evidence for the truth of Revelation as strong and irresistible: I mean, PROPHECY; by bestowing its virtue upon his chosen Servants (such as St. PAUL and St. JOHN). Who now more simply, now more enigmatically, predicted the future fortunes of the Church, throughout its several stages; which, as they became accomplished and fulfilled, would, in the strongest manner, confirm the Faithful of every age in the belief of the divine original of the Gospel.

That this gracious indulgence to the well-being of the Church was constant, and for the support of *Revelation in general*, is seen more fully in the Jewish Economy; where, though MIRACLES, by reason of the peculiar Form of that Dispensation, necessarily accompanied it through a course of many ages, that is, during all the time the Jews were under an *extraordinary Providence*; yet as *Miracles*, together with that extraordinary Providence, were to cease long before the dissolution of the *Theocracy*, their holy Prophets, and DANIEL more circumstantially and minutely than the rest, foretold the various fortune of that Republic, from his own time to the end, in order to afford the later Jews, as those Prophecies kept fulfilling, the clearest evidence of the truth of their Religion. Such was the gracious provision of Providence in support of revealed Religion *.

St. Peter's

* In a former part of these Discourses, I have treated of

St. Peter's reasoning therefore stands thus, in this important passage of his Epistle—that you may be assured (says he) *we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power of our Lord* at his second coming, it is well known that we *were eye-witnesses of the majesty* of his first coming, when a voice from Heaven confirmed his mission and ministry. But this is not the whole, we have a *more sure word of Prophecy*, which gives still further credit to what we taught you concerning this matter. So you have the double security of *Miracles* and *Prophecies* for this truth in particular, which God had been pleased to give for the Faith in general.—*Miracles*, says he, was not all, nor indeed the principal. *We have* A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.—The terms *more sure*, in the translation, are a little equivocal, and may signify either an evidence which may be *more surely relied on*, or an evidence which *preserves its entire force much longer*; and this latter is the sense of the Original, βεβαιότερον, *more firm, constant, and durable*, which (as we have shewn) is the nature of *Prophecy fulfilled*, when compared with the *traditional* evidence of *miracles*. In these, we depend on the good faith of others; in those, we rely on our own senses: For the Apostle's observation respects not

of the necessity of the Evidence both of Miracles and Prophecies in conjunction, for another purpose, namely, the establishment of the MESSIAH-CHARACTER: Here, I am upon the expediency of both separately, and in different periods, for the support of REVEALED RELIGION in general.

not the evidence which he and his friends had of the truth of the Gospel, from *instant* miracles; but that evidence which rises on *traditional*, as it abides in the Church. So that here is no comparison between St. Peter's sensible knowledge of the *miracle in the mount* in particular, and of the *word of Prophecy* in general. But just the contrary; between the *traditional* evidence of miracles in general, and of the prophecies of the future fortunes of the Church in particular. This is the direct aim and tendency of the Apostle's argument; which some late theological refinements and antitheological prejudices have concurred to render infinitely obscure and intricate, though, in itself, as clear as it is rational.

This being premised, we come directly to the question—What *Prophecy* it is, which the Apostle calls *a more sure word—a light shining in a dark place*, &c. a Prophecy, which, though it were to receive its *full* evidence in a future age, yet as then beginning to operate, deserved the most serious attention of the faithful, in that wherein the Epistle was written:—*whereunto* (says he) *ye do well that you take heed?*

To which I answer—The description can agree with nothing but the predictions of St. Paul and St. John, concerning ANTICHRIST: For those of St. Paul (and probably the other * of St. John) had been published before the writing of this Epistle; for St. Peter recurring again, towards the con-

* See, concerning the *Apocalypse*, Sir I. Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, &c. p. 235—246.

clusion

clusion* of his Epistle, as the subject of it required, to that *more sure word of Prophecy* mentioned in the beginning, refers evidently to those parts of St. Paul's writings, where the Prophecies in the *Revelations* concerning ANTICHRIST are summarily abridged; of which Peter gives this character—*As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all other Scriptures, unto their own destruction*†. In which words, we have the truest picture of those indiscreet Interpreters, who set up for Prophets, in explaining prophetic events yet unaccomplished; instead of confining themselves to the illustration of those Prophecies that are already fulfilled.

Now this book of the *Revelations*, containing Predictions darkly and enigmatically delivered, hath yet such strong marks of the Divinity about it, as may well justify St. Peter's character concerning it, of *a light shining in a dark place*; while his direction *to take heed* to it, and to contemplate the subject-matter of it, bespeaks his charitable attention to the pastoral care. For several of the Prophecies having already had their completion, even in those early times, frequent attention to this *light* was useful, to confirm their Faith in the past, and to support their Hopes in the future.

The principal subject of this famous Book relating to one great Event—*The future fortunes of the Church, under the usurpation of* THE MAN OF

* Chap. iii. ver. 15. † Ver. 16.

SIN,

SIN, is elegantly called, by way of eminence, the WORD OF PROPHECY. It began fulfilling even before Peter wrote this Epistle; for St. Paul, speaking of the MAN OF SIN, to the Thessalonians, says, *the Mystery of iniquity doth already work* *. It is therefore, with the greatest truth as well as strength of Colouring, called A LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE. Just so much was seen of the busy *mystery of iniquity*, now beginning to work, as was sufficient to fix men's attention, and to put them on their guard against its delusions.

The Apostle too, for the further encouragement of those whom he exhorts to give early attention to this ray of *light*, adds, that a time would come when the surrounding *darkness* should be dispersed, and *Day* pour in upon the present obscurities in this WORD OF PROPHECY: on which, in the mean time, they were patiently to wait—UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR SHOULD ARISE. This long wish'd-for *Day* at length appeared, with REFORMATION on its wings: A Blessing, which redeemed Reason and Religion from the harpy-claws of Monkish Ignorance and Superstition.—The restoration of abused Science, which accompanied it, is well described by the *Day dawning*; as the defecation of polluted Religion is by the *Day-star rising in their hearts.*

At this important Æra, the great *Mystery of Iniquity* was clearly revealed; *Antichrist* was fully laid open and exposed; and such Evidence given by *Prophecy* to the truth of the Christian Faith,

* Second Epistle, chap. ii. ver. 7.

as

as must, while Reason remains amongst men, strike conviction on the *hearts* of an unprejudiced. For what but the Spirit of God was sufficient to foretell the Usurpation of an Antichristian Tyranny, which was to arise many ages after, within the Church of Christ itself; a species of blasphemous Dominion, which the world had never seen before, and of which, not the least conception could be formed either from example, similitude, or analogy. But the Apostle foreseeing that when this flood of *light* should break in upon a long-benighted world, the imagination would be, now, as apt to extravagate, as before, when it was bewildered amidst the surrounding darkness, He thought proper to add this important caution—*Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*; i. e. "When you sit down to study the Apocalypse, let it ever be under the guidance of this great Truth, That it is not in the department of man to interpret unfulfilled Prophecies, by pretending to fix the natures and seasons of Events, clearly indeed predicted, but obscurely described. For that the Interpreter of Prophecy is not Man, but God; who, by bringing events to pass, affords to Man the only true interpretation."

That this is the meaning of the Apostle's words, so long wrested to absurd and licentious purposes, is evident from the reason he assigns of his caution —*for the Prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:* i. e. "for Prophecy, under the old Law, was not the effect of human conceit,

conceit, but of divine influence." Therefore both the *prediction*, and the *interpretation*, which is the *accomplishment* of the prediction, are equally the word and work of God, and become manifest in the course of his Providence.—Nor did the Prophets themselves always understand the full or even the true import of what they delivered, being only the Organs of the Holy Spirit. Much less then can we suppose the common Ministers of the word to be qualified for the office of Interpreters of unfulfilled Prophecies. How necessary it was to give this caution, appears from what he himself observes in this very Epistle, of certain *unlearned* and *unstable* men, who *wrested those hard places* in St. Paul, where the *man of sin* is mentioned, to their own destruction*.

This dangerous ABUSE, which began so early, and lasted so long, hath infected every age of the Church; especially these LATTER TIMES; when the wonderful accomplishment of several of the Prophecies concerning *Antichrist*, having set Divines upon a more accurate study of the *Apocalypse*, the men of warmer imaginations, forgetting this apostolic caution, instead of confining their contemplations to the Prophecies already fulfilled, for the support of their Faith, and the consolation of their Hopes, have erected themselves into PROPHETS; and, taking the work out of the hands of Providence, have dared to predict of what is yet in the womb of Time, and still remains in a dark place.

But how extravagant soever some Protestant Interpreters have been, when they gave a loose to their

* Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4.

Imaginations, yet the soberest of them have universally concurred with the wildest, that this *man of sin*, this *Antichrist*, could be no other than the man who fills the PAPAL CHAIR: Whose usurpation in Christ's Kingdom, and Tyranny over Conscience, by *intoxicating the Kings of the earth with the cup of his enchantments*, and Himself, *with the blood of the saints*, so eminently distinguishes him from all other unjust Powers, that the various Churches who broke loose from his *Enchantments*, agreed in supporting the vindication of their Liberty, on this common Principle, that the POPE or CHURCH OF ROME WAS THE VERY ANTICHRIST FORETOLD.

On this was the REFORMATION begun and carried on: On this, was the great SEPARATION from the Church of Rome conceived and perfected: For, though *Persecution for Opinion* would acquit those of schism, whom the Church of Rome had driven from her Communion; yet, on the principle that She is *Antichrist*, they had not only a right, but lay under the obligation of a command, *to come out of this spiritual Babylon* *.

On this Principle (the common ground, as we say, of Reformation) the several Protestant Churches, how different soever in their various models, were all erected: though, in course of time, some of the less stable have slipped beside their foundation, and now stand aslant from the common building. For as the zeal of the Reformed kept abating, the Principle came to be deserted; and at length laughed at as the fancy of brain-sick visionaries.

* Rev. xviii. 4.

Therefore,

Therefore, before we proceed to the vindication of this important Truth, it may be proper to inquire into the chief causes of so general a Desertion—I mean as it is now seen amongst ourselves.

II. The first occasion of discredit began very early. Some of the first Reformers, even in the days of ELIZABETH, suffered themselves to entertain scruples concerning the further use of whatever, in the *Roman Ritual*, had been abused to superstition. These scruples were fostered by the Mosaic Law, ill understood: in which, whatever had been abused to Idolatry, was (as they conceived) condemned and desecrated. Now the force of this analogy (such as it had) arose from the Principle, that THE POPE WAS ANTICHRIST, and the CHURCH OF ROME THE SPIRITUAL BABYLON: from whence the *People of Christ* being commanded to come out, as the *People of God* had been, from Egypt, it seemed congruous to reason that PAPAL and EGYPTIAN Rites were equally abhorred by the God of purity.

I will not stay at present, as it is a matter foreign to the subject, to discriminate the natures of the TWO DISPENSATIONS, by which the folly of applying the Laws of One to the administration of the Other, might be made apparent.

It is more to the purpose to observe, that these scrupulous men (from thenceforth called PURITANS) by their obstinacy, which ended in a *Separation*, soon grew very troublesome, and even formidable to Government. And ANTICHRIST, and the WHORE OF BABYLON, being now become the

watchword, as well on account of its being the general ground of *Reformation*, as because they deemed it the particular support of their *Puritanism*; it is not at all strange, that what, till now, had been a *common Principle*, should, from henceforth, be considered by the Established Church, in no other light than the *support* of separation, and the *badge* of separatists. But, as a *support*, those who were most attached to the national worship would be forward to bring the Principle into discredit; and as the *badge*, they would be ashamed to have it appear upon themselves.

The reign of JAMES the First gave another and more decisive stroke to the unfashionable doctrine of *Antichrist*. He abhorred the PURITANS, against whom Elizabeth was contented to be only on her guard; and he feared the PAPISTS, whom Elizabeth set at defiance; so that to countenance the doctrine of *Antichrist*, was, in his opinion, to give credit to the Puritan, whom he hated, and to make the Papists desperate, whom he feared. The Court-Divines, therefore, sought his favour, by speaking slightly of the doctrine; or by treating it with contempt. And the greatest Divine * and Scholar of that age ruined his fortune at Court by an immortal work in defence of this *common Principle*. Nor does James's writing a *Paraphrase on the Revelations*, before he was twenty, to prove the *Pope* to be *Antichrist*, or the cutting some lively jokes on the old Gentleman in his more advanced age, at all shew that his sentiments were different from those I have here given

* Mede.

to

to him; for the *Paraphrase* was apparently the composition of his Puritan Governors; and as for his Jokes, he would at any time sacrifice a *Friend* to their good reception.

But there was another cause of still more weight, which, at this time, concurred to discredit the *doctrine of Antichrist*: and that was the effects of the persecutions which the Puritans, at that time, underwent. For, religious Persecution hardens and contracts the Will, and inflates and inflames the Imagination; so that the Puritans, supported under their oppression, by *stubbornness* and *enthusiasm*, soon began to fancy that they saw the evils they suffered foretold in their favourite Prophecies concerning *Antichrist*: which set them upon interpreting the *Apocalypse*, not so much to illustrate, by the aid of critical learning what was past, as to teach with the air and spirit of Prophets, what was to come: regardless of the sage information of the Apostle, that the unfulfilled Prophecies *are not of private interpretation*. It will be easily believed, what wild work this spirit must produce in minds thus agitated, when brooding over so mysterious a Book: In which, amongst their other visionary discoveries, they saw all that concerned their own cause and sufferings, together with the happy issue of them, in the glorious triumphs of the Saints: And it will be as easily conceived, what dishonour these extravagances must bring upon the great PRINCIPLE itself. The Court and Comic Poets, who are generally the Pensioners or Creatures of the Great, soon took up the subject; and having it at this advantage, turned

these Prophecies and their Interpreters, into mockery and ridicule. From thence the People catched the infection; and *Antichrist* and *Fanaticism* have been ever since synonymous terms.

Laud (who was bred up in College with an aversion to the Puritans) when under Charles the First he soon became all powerful, encouraged the more rational principles of the *Arminians*; of which sect Grotius and Episcopius were the two main Pillars. Now the moderation of the One, and a visionary scheme of the Other, indisposed both from pressing Popery with the victorious doctrine of *Antichrist*. This, which added fresh discredit to it, encouraged one Court-Divine * (afterwards an Archbishop) in an Act at Oxford, to deny publicly, that the *Pope was Antichrist*; while another of the same fashionable party, though much more able and discreet †, ventured, in pure aversion to Fanaticism, to adopt the System of Grotius on this head; a System, to which Popery has been much indebted; and which Grotius seems to have invented for the sake only of his darling Project, an Union between the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

The Civil Wars, and the overthrow of the Constitution, soon followed, the glorious achievement of a rabble of armed Fanatics! whose Enthusiasm was inflamed to its height, by their second project, to destroy *Antichrist*, and erect *the fifth Monarchy of* King *Jesus*. Indeed, these were no other than the various spawn of the first persecuted *Puritans*. So that when Monarchy was restored, and Church-

* Sheldon. † Hammond.

men

men of greatest merit were, by a rare chance, become most in repute at Court, the severity of their sufferings in the late confusions, and their aversion to the fanatic spirit that occasioned those sufferings, enough disposed them to follow the example of the old Court Clergy, in discountenancing a Doctrine whose abuse had so much contributed to aggravate the preceding mischiefs.

The licentious practices and the Popish projects of the Favourites and Ministers of CHARLES THE SECOND further concurred to bring this GREAT PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE into discredit: Amongst these, whatever concerned the sublimities of Religion, and the mysterious ways of Providence; whatever disgraced the Church of Rome, or stigmatized her with the brand of ANTICHRIST, was sure to be treated with contempt and aversion.

The REVOLUTION, indeed, removed many of these prejudices; and, by the vindication of *religious* as well as *civil* Liberty, abated the rancour of Sects and Parties against one another. Nay, by the recent terror and abhorrence of Popery, from which men were but just recovered, it even produced contrary prejudices, favourable to the cause of truth. So that now one would have hoped, this capital *Prophecy* might at length have procured a fair and equitable hearing. But, alas! the remedy came too late: The distemper was grown inveterate, and ANTICHRIST and BABYLON were still held to be the language of cant and enthusiasm. So that no eminence of genius, no depth of Science, could secure the Writers on *this Prophecy* from contempt. Of this

we have lately had a portentous instance, respecting the most sublime mind* that ever was; and in whose amazing efforts this nation most justly prides itself: who was no sooner known to have commented on the REVELATIONS, than he was judged † to have fallen into dotage. And this great Expositor, as great when he laid open the mysteries of the *Religious* System, as when he unveiled those of the *Natural*, was almost generally condemned to neglect and oblivion.

III. Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, under which the man must labour who comes to the defence of this SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, yet a full sense of the importance of the case will be sufficient to encourage a Protestant Divine to make the attempt: For, on the Prophecy concerning *Antichrist* the Protestant Churches were founded; and by the APOCALYPSE in general are they impregnably upheld.

The contempt, in which the Doctrine now lies, hath kept in credit the miserable shifts the Church of Rome hath employed to cure the *deadly wound* which cannot be *healed*. For as that Community hold the *Apocalypse* to be Canonical, they are obliged to own, that the object of the Prophecy is *Antichrist*, or the *Man of sin*; and, what is more, that it is in ROME itself where he domineers. For, the place of his residence, the City on the *seven*

* NEWTON.

† By Voltaire and the French Philosophers; a sect sprung from our Freethinkers.

hills,

hills, is so plainly marked out, that it can be neither mistaken nor denied.

This is hard upon them, as it lays them under the necessity of going back as high as the first PERSECUTING EMPERORS, that is, to the first Ages of the Church, to seek for this *Man of sin*; and in the circumstances of the rage and impiety of those tyrants, and in the state of the then suffering Church, to find out all that relates to the *Antichristian Power* foretold.

The difference of opinion, therefore, between the Romish and Protestant Churches, on this important point, stands thus:—The *Romanists* hold, that this ANTICHRISTIAN POWER is a power of the CIVIL kind; the Reformed contend, that it is a power ECCLESIASTICAL. While both concur to fix the *seat* of this Power, whose nature is thus disputed, in the CITY OF ROME.

This long Contest may therefore be well reduced to a single question, a question which leads to a decisive issue,—IS THIS ANTICHRISTIAN POWER OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL, OR IS IT OF THE CIVIL KIND?—If it be a *civil power*, the Church of Rome gains her cause, and clears herself of the capital charge of the *Man of sin*'s sitting in the chair of PETER, and usurping in the *Kingdom of Christ*. If the *power be ecclesiastical*, the Protestant Churches triumph, as being established on *Prophecy*, and having their secession and separation justified * by the command of the Holy Spirit.

To determine this decisive question, we shall have no occasion to launch out into that wide

* Rev. xviii. 4.

ocean

ocean of Literature, agitated by a thousand storms, arising from every controversial quarter of this unexplored world of MYSTICAL PROPHECY. For, if the Power foretold be of the *civil* kind, it can relate only to the persecuting EMPERORS; if it be a Power *ecclesiastic*, it can relate only to persecuting POPES. For it is agreed on all hands, that PERSECUTION is the BADGE OF ANTICHRIST.

But before I proceed more directly to shew that the *Pope*, and not the *Emperor*, is interested in the actions and fortunes of this MAN OF SIN, it will give additional force to the Evidence, if we reflect, previously, on the distress to which, both matters of *fact* and matters of *right* have reduced the Advocates of the Papal Cause.

To evade the edge of these Prophecies, which cut so deep into the vitals of the Church of Rome, her Advocates did not want dexterity, when they interpreted *Antichrist* to be a Power of the *civil* kind. This took the burthen from off their shoulders, by removing the whole Scene into an opposite quarter; a quarter fertile of plausible applications. Their dexterity consisted in turning necessity into a shew of choice. For the birth of *Antichrist*, his acts and achievements, being confined to one particular City; in order to find a *Civil Power* domineering in this City, and persecuting the Church of Christ, they were obliged to force their way upwards, to the first Ages of Christianity. But, how much this makes their Cause to labour, we shall now endeavour to evince.

1. First then, had *Antichrist* or the *man of sin*

been the persecuting Roman Emperors, the Christians of that time must needs have seen and acknowledged his Character, in the working and the accomplishment of the Prophecy: They, who were Contemporaries, and, of course, perfectly well acquainted with every circumstance respecting the *Persecutors*, and every circumstance attending the *Persecution*, could not but see how all of them (if such were the fact) quadrated with every part of the *Prediction*; and so have been fully convinced, that the *Man of sin* was the *Emperor of the world*; as indeed he was not likely to be one in a much lower Station. On the contrary, though PERSECUTION *be the family-badge of Antichrist*, yet the Christians of that time saw nothing in the *imperial edicts*, or in their execution, that had any marked resemblance to the desolations to be committed by the *man of sin*. They saw nothing there even to excite their attention, or to erect their minds towards the Crimes or towards the Punishment of the *man of sin*, so graphically described by the apostles Paul and John: nor indeed any other circumstance in their then state of oppression, sufficient to rescue the *Apocalypse* from a total neglect, save in the doubts they entertained of its authenticity. So that, if the *Prophecy of Antichrist* concerned the *early* fortunes of the Christian Church, as our Adversaries pretend; and that, yet, the Church, most concerned, saw nothing of it, as was the case; Unbelievers will say, that no greater disgrace can befal PROPHECY than what these two things, when laid together, will occasion.

2. Again,

2. Again, it is to be observed, that the Information concerning *Antichrist*, or the *Man of sin*, was not intrusted to St. John alone. It was communicated to other of the Apostles; perhaps to all, for reasons we may easily collect; certainly, to the *great Apostle of the Gentiles*. Now St. Paul, in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, combating a growing error then risen in the Church, "that the SECOND COMING of our Lord was at hand," says, *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that* MAN OF SIN *be* FIRST *revealed, the son of Perdition* *. This is no obscure intimation that the reign of ANTICHRIST was at some considerable distance. But the words which follow put the matter out of doubt: *Remember ye not* (says he) *that when I was with you, I told you these things? and now ye know,* WHAT WITHHOLDETH *that* HE *might be revealed in his time. For the* MYSTERY OF INIQUITY *doth already work: only* HE, *who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that* WICKED ONE *be revealed* †.

By this, it appears, that the impediment, or *let* to the revelation of *Antichrist* was something *external*.—That spirit of Pride, persecution, and impiety, which makes up the Character of the MAN OF SIN, was already breeding and fostering in the Church; and were it not for an impediment *without*, which would take some time to remove, his appearance might have been soon expected. This impediment, we see, St. Paul scruples to lay open by Letter; at

* Chap. ii. ver. 3. † Ver. 5, 6, 7.

the

the same time, he reminds them, that, in his Conversations with them, he had explained the secret. But surely, when his argument led him to it, he had small cause to decline a repetition, unless he thought it dangerous to be put in writing. Such a reserve was not his wont. On other occasions of precept and instruction, he inculcated what he would impress upon their minds, by frequent remonstrances and repetitions, *in season and out of season*. We must conclude, therefore, that something of great importance occasioned his reserve. And if this *let* to the appearance of *Antichrist* were the present EXISTENCE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, we are not to wonder he should scruple to commit so dangerous a secret to paper; He who, on all occasions, was so cautious not to give offence to the *civil Power*. And what would have been deemed so high a crime of State against IMMORTAL ROME, as to teach that her Dominion was to pass away; and, as an obstruction to the eternal Decrees of Providence, to give place to a Power still more tyrannical and unjust?

Now, as the *Papal usurpation* arose out of the Ruins of the *Roman Empire*, and could have arisen, naturally, by no other means, we have great reason to believe, that the EXISTENCE of this EMPIRE was the very *let* and impediment so obscurely intimated by the prudent Apostle.

However, he tells us, that the secret had been communicated to the Churches. And probably it was one amongst the chief of those dangerous informations, which, we learn from the history of the Primitive

Primitive Church, were kept, with all care, from the knowledge of the Catechumens.

What then would such a communication to the Church produce, but what it did produce, a general Opinion, that the appearance of *Antichrist* was to be in the *latter times?* The Apostle, we find, when he combated the common error, that our Lord's *second coming* was at hand, employs this general opinion concerning *Antichrist*, to shew how much they were mistaken, by an argument to this purpose, "You acknowledge that *Antichrist* is to appear in the *latter times*; now this *Man of sin* must be revealed before the *second coming*; consequently the *second coming* must needs be far off."

The *late appearance of Antichrist* was a doctrine so universally received in the primitive Church, that it was like a proverbial saying amongst them; and from thence St. John takes occasion to MORALIZE on the Doctrine, and warn his followers against that spirit which, in after-times, was to animate the *Man of sin*.—"Little children," says he, "it is the *last* "*time:* and ye have heard that *Antichrist* shall come: "even now there are many *Antichrists*; where- "by ye know that it is the *last time**." As much as to say, We are fallen into the very dregs of time, as appears from that *Antichristian* spirit which now so much pollutes the Churches: for you know, it is a common saying, that "*Antichrist is to come in those wretched days.*" The Apostle goes on to employ the same allusion through the rest of the Epistle—*He is* ANTICHRIST *that denieth the*

* 1 John ii. 18.

Father

Father and the Son *.—Again—*This is that spirit of* ANTICHRIST, *whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world* †.—And again—*Many deceivers re entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and* AN ANTICHRIST‡. Where, we see, the appellation, *Antichrist*, is employed to signify *an enemy of God and godliness in general*, by the same figure of speech that *Elias* was designed in those times to signify a Prophet; and *Rachel*, a Daughter of Israel; and that, in these times, *Judas* is used for a Traitor, and *Nero* for a Tyrant. But as these converted terms necessarily suppose, that they originally belonged to persons of the like Characters, who had them in *proper*; so does the name *Antichrist*, transferred by St. John, to certain of his impious Contemporaries, as necessarily suppose, that there was one who should arise in the latter times, to whom the *title* eminently belonged, as marked out in the Prophecies by the *proper name* of ANTICHRIST.

This was not amiss to observe, because the Advocates of the See of Rome have laid hold of these passages to shew, that ANTICHRIST was only a *generic term* for every enemy of God and godliness Whereas we Protestants insist, that it was the *Proper name* of one Grand Impostor; not *one* by the individuality of *Person*, but by the identity of *Station*, to be revealed in the latter Ages of the Church; and, after he had been foretold by name, that was applied *generically*, by the commonest

* Ver. 22. † Chap. iv. ver. 3. ‡ 2 Epist. ver. 7.

figure

figure of speech, to all who had any semblance to his Character. The only difference is, that Prophecy enabled the sacred Writers to use the generic appellation, before the appearance of him who had it for his patronymic; whereas, in the other cases, the generic term must needs come after the Person who first bore it for his own name.

From these places therefore of St. Paul and St. John it necessarily follows, that the ANTICHRIST or MAN OF SIN predicted by Both of them (his *Person* and *Fortunes*, more fully by the latter; his *Merchandise* and *Traffic*, more minutely by the former) could not be the persecuting Emperors.

Another very persuasive argument, that the Antichristian P wer in question is the growth of these latter times, is te mysterious dar kness in which the enigmatic prophecies in the Apocalypse concerning ANTICHRIST lay involved for many ages. *A light* indeed *shining in a dark place*, to the few sagacious observers of every age, but surrounded with so thick a darkness to all besides, that, despairing to penetrate the gloom, they consigned the *Apocalypse* to a general neglect, not without much uncertainty and doubt concerning its Author. But these *latter times* have seen the clouds and darkness gradually fly off, and the *light* grow stronger and brighter as the fate of ANTICHRIST approaches. This seems to be a sure evidence, that the grand Impostor is of these times; that he has advanced through several stages of his Usurpation; that two or three Ages ago his power was at the height; that he is now past his meridian, and hasting to his decline; and that some future

future Age, not very remote, will see his total destruction; and consequently the remaining obscurity of this famous book made manifest to all*.

A third

* A late Protestant Editor and Commentator of the NEW TESTAMENT, in reverence perhaps to the memory of Grotius, one of the brightest Ornaments of the Church or Sect to which this Editor belongs, contends, as that great man had done before him, that the CHURCH OF ROME IS NOT ANTICHRIST. We know what it was that induced Grotius to maintain that system; it was a project of a comprehension long since out of credit, from a sense of its visionary impracticable nature: what it was that induced this learned man to revive it, a doctrine so injurious to the Protestant Cause, unless a mistaken fondness for that excellent Person's Memory, I confess myself utterly at a loss to conceive.

However, he assures us, that the fanciful application of *Antichrist* to the *Church of Rome*, was first made in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, by the FRANCISCAN MONKS: from whom he says the *Reformed Churches* received it: and then adds—*But the thing will hardly find credit with men of sense, that in a barbarous and unlearned age, the true key to the Apocalypse should be intrusted to these paltry Monks, destitute of letters and all knowledge of Antiquity, and denied to the whole Christian Church before, for Thirteen whole Centuries together*†. No white-washer of Popery could have done better.

In a HISTORY OF THINGS PAST, and recorded in the *learned languages*, the languages of the times, the best Scholar and most sagacious Critic without doubt bids

† Ægrè tamen apud cordatos fidem inveniet, seculo barbaro et indocto veram Apocalypseos clavem, per integra tredecim secula omnibus Christianis occultatam, a Monachis omni linguarum et antiquitatum cognitione destitutis, repertam fuisse. Nov. Test. Græc. Amst. 1752. Tom. II. pp. 891, 892.

A third Objection to this papal interpretation, may be drawn from a Principle laid down in the entrance on

fairest for the best Interpreter: and the *earlier* he is to the subject, the better chance he has of being in the right.

But in a PROPHECY OF THINGS TO COME, foretold in all its circumstances, common sense assures us, that he is most likely to interpret best who lives *latest*, and comes nearest to the time of the *completion*. For he who hath seen one part already fulfilled, a part which gives light to the remainder yet unfulfilled, will certainly be best able to judge of the whole, and best understand to what object it capitally relates.

The most exalted genius, with the exactest knowledge of Antiquity, and skill in Languages, could not enable the *early Fathers of the Church* to form any tolerable judgment of a thing at that time almost totally hidden in futurity; especially if it were (as was the case here) in a matter of which the mind of man, for want of the knowledge or experience of any thing similar, could have no conception.

On the other hand, the profoundest ignorance, in the want of all those accomplishments, could not hinder the most stupid *Monk* from seeing what was before his eyes, *Antichrist in Pontificals*, and the *Man of Sin arrived at his full stature*. This extraordinary Personage he might know, by the mere information of his sense, was the bloody tyrant foretold.

On other occasions indeed, for wise and general purposes, it pleased Divine Providence to *hide* the great mysteries of the Gospel *from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto Babes*. But in this, the same dispensation was necessary and unavoidable: And the FRANCISCANS, without a miracle, had the honour of starting

ANTICHRIST

on this Discourse, viz. That *Miracles* and *Prophecies* are the two great pillars of *revealed Religion*; but

ANTICHRIST in his form, which, without a miracle, the *Origens* and the *Chrysostoms* must hunt after in vain.

But the pleasantest part of the argument is behind.—*If* (says the learned Critic) *we believe the Franciscans when they tell us, that the Pope is the Beast and the whore of Babylon, we must of* NECESSITY *believe them, when they tell us, that they themselves are the only spiritual Brethren, the true Church, and that the single mark of the true Church is to live on alms, and to wear a strait and short capuchine**. Commend me to a Reasoner like this; a Reasoner on *necessity*. What! because that which the *Franciscans* saw before their eyes, and we see with ours, and so agree with them, that the Prophecy of Paul and John concerning ANTICHRIST was fulfilled in the POPE, therefore we must of *necessity* believe these same Monks when they say they are the true Church, though no Prophecy hath given us the marks either of them or their pretended church, unless it be in the *Frogs* that *came out of the mouth of the* BEAST.—If you give a man credit for what he can prove, we are obliged, it seems, to give him credit for what he cannot.

The Commentators of the present age, as living so much later than those *Franciscans*, have seen more marks of the Beast, as he grew more enraged; for then, as the poet said of his fellow-beast the *Tiger*,

—he swell'd with angry pride,
And call'd forth all his spots on every side—

* Qui vero Franciscanis credit, Pontificem Romanam esse belluam et meretricem Babylonicam, iisdem etiam credat NECESSE EST solos fratres spirituales esse veram ecclesiam, et unicum veræ ecclesiæ characterem esse vivere pane mendicato, et gestare arctum brevemque cucullum. p. 892.

but raised in succession, each in its proper time and place. From whence it may be collected, that the ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES belongs to the *latter times*, just as the WORKING OF MIRACLES does to the *former*: The use of *Prophecies fulfilled* being to strengthen the evidence of our Faith, from *Miracles performed*; which a long intermission of many ages may seem to have impaired. To suppose, therefore, that the accomplishment of these *Prophecies* happened, and is to be sought for, in the *first ages* of the Church, tends to cross and defeat the gracious purpose of the Founder; while it takes away *Prophecy* from these *latter times*, in which it is wanted, and gives it to the former, which stood in no need of it; bestowing on some Ages a wasteful abundance, and depriving others of a necessary supply.

Thus, on the confession of our Adversaries, the head-quarters of ANTICHRIST being fixed in *Rome*; and,

and so have been able to give the most convincing proofs that he is the Inhabitant of the *Seven Hills*; and in this the Protestant World has generally acquiesced. But does the sober part of it believe, that therefore the warm-headed Interpreters of the *Apocalypse* have discovered (as they pretend) the MARTYRS, SAINTS, and WITNESSES, persecuted and despoiled by the SCARLET WHORE and her infernal Abettors, in their own Friends and Parties in Religion? By no means. And why? These Interpreters prove, in the most incontestible manner, that the CHURCH OF ROME IS ANTICHRIST; but we see they only fancy they have discovered the Objects of his rage, in those who do honour to their Cause.

and, on the conviction of our senses, his tyrannical and usurped Power being exercised in these *latter times;* We come more directly to the main question, WHETHER ANTICHRIST BE A CIVIL POWER, OR A SPIRITUAL ?

That it was a SPIRITUAL, we shall now evince, by the following reasons:

1. In these *latter times*, there hath been no Civil power in ROME, separate from an Ecclesiastical; but an Ecclesiastical only, which hath drawn after it a Civil. So that if ROME were the seat of ANTICHRIST, and these *latter times* gave rise to his Usurpation; and that, in these *latter times*, there was no such civil power in ROME, but this of Antichrist; the consequence will be, that ANTICHRIST as such is a SPIRITUAL or Ecclesiastical, and not a CIVIL power.

The thing which hath kept this controversy on a creditable footing, is the TWO POWERS changing hands as it were, and invading one another's provinces.

So that when we urge the Papists with *Antichrist*'s having the marks of a *spiritual power*, and therefore, not the *Imperial*; they reply, these marks may well be seen in a Power confessedly Civil, since the *Emperor*, like the *Pope*, was always *Pontifex Maximus* here; and very often, a god, or a Saint at least, hereafter.

When, on the other hand, they urge us with those marks of Antichrist which bespeak him a *civil power*; we reply, that though the *Pope*'s essential power be indeed of the *spiritual* kind, yet he rightly

wears these marks of a *secular*; since such a power he had annexed to his spiritual, (just as the Emperor annexed a spiritual power to the civil) by his investing himself with a civil Dominion, called *St. Peter's Patrimony.*

2. So far in confutation of the System framed by Grotius, to facilitate the project of a visionary Comprehension; a system of real service to nothing but the Papal Tyranny. It is true, that the evidence here employed is only negative; yet it comes with a force, which no *positive* evidence can exceed. But to leave no subterfuge for doubt, I shall close all with the other species, the proof *positive*, taken from the Apocalyptic Character of this famous Personage.

3. POWER is male or female indifferently. Hence the *Power* in question is sometimes said to be the attribute of the MAN OF SIN; sometimes, of the SCARLET WHORE. A corrupt Church may be found either under a popular or monarchic government. Under a popular, One name and one personage would serve in enigmatic Prophecy, both for the Governor and Governed; because they are all reciprocally one and the other: and such a Church might be commodiously represented by *one* single Personage. But, under a *monarchic* or despotic Government, the *Acts and Monuments* of such a Church cannot be well represented but under *Two*; the Tyrannic Head and miserable Members, sometimes suffering under, and sometimes, again, sharing in, the Tyranny.

On

On this account, there was a propriety and elegance in the occasional change of the Sex, by the sacred Penmen. The POPE, as Usurper and Tyrant in *Christ's Kingdom*, is represented under the *male image* of ANTICHRIST or the MAN OF SIN; and the CHURCH OF ROME, whose cup of abominations had debauched and intoxicated the world, under the *female image* of the SCARLET WHORE.

And as this affords us the clearest proof, that the Antichristian Power in question is of the SPIRITUAL and not of the civil kind, I shall pursue the Vision in those famous Prophecies which presents the Christian Church under a female form; first, in its celestial, native, purity; and then, in its degenerate and apostate state. For, of all the emblematic Pictures in the Apocalyptic Visions, those two are the least ambiguous.

In the xiith Chapter, a WOMAN comes from *Heaven*, " clothed with the Sun, and the Moon " under her feet, and upon her head a crown of " twelve stars: And she being with child, cried, " travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered— " And behold a great RED DRAGON, having *seven* " *heads and ten horns*, and SEVEN CROWNS upon his " heads.—And the Dragon stood before the Wo- " man, which was ready to be delivered, for to " devour her child as soon as it was born. And " she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule " all nations with a rod of Iron; and the Child was " caught up unto God, and to his throne. And " the Woman fled into the WILDERNESS, where

" she had a place prepared of God, that they should " feed her there."——

In the xviiith Chapter, an Angel says to John, " Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment " of the GREAT WHORE, that sitteth upon many " Waters: with whom the Kings of the earth have " committed fornication, and the Inhabiters of the " earth have been made drunk with the wine of her " fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit " into the WILDERNESS: and I saw a WOMAN sit " upon a SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST full of names " of blasphemy, having *seven heads and ten horns.* " And the WOMAN was arrayed in purple and " scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious " stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her " hand, full of abominations and filthiness of for- " nication. And upon her forehead was a name " written, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother* " *of Harlots,* and abominations of the earth. And " I saw the WOMAN drunken with the blood of the " Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of " Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with " great admiration. And the Angel said unto me, " Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee " the Mystery of the WOMAN, and of the beast " that carrieth her, which hath the *seven heads and* " *ten horns.*—And here is the mind which hath " Wisdom, the seven heads are *seven mountains* " on which the WOMAN sitteth.—These shall make " war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall over- " come them."

Though

Though the two prophetic Visions, I have here transcribed, be full of evidence concerning the fortunes of ANTICHRIST, and the fate of the SCARLET WHORE; and that the POPE and See of ROME are more than the *alias* names of the Criminal; yet our point being only to shew, that the ANTICHRISTIAN POWER in question is a SPIRITUAL and not a *civil* Power, I have at present nothing to do with its various ABOMINATIONS, here sketched out, further than as some circumstances, concerning these *abominations*, speak more fully to the general truth we are upon.

The SAME WOMAN, who represents the Christian Religion, we see appear in both the Prophetic Visions;—pure and immaculate when first let down from *Heaven*; but defiled and contaminated by a long commerce in the *Wilderness* of this world.

In her Virgin-state we see her armed in the celestial panoply of FAITH and KNOWLEDGE; and, (while in this state) like her Almighty Father, *without variableness, or shadow of changing:* expressed by her being *clothed with the sun, crowned with twelve stars, and the moon under her feet.*—She is in labour with her first-born, and *pained to be delivered*; by which is admirably held out, the dangers and difficulties our holy Religion struggled with, in giving birth to the infant Church, whom the Powers of this world stood ready to devour: strongly expressed by *the great red dragon who stood before the woman ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* Whose purpose was defeated by the *extraordinary Providence* of Heaven,

wakeful

wakeful for its preservation: *and her child*, whose future fortune, we are told, was *to rule all nations* (when he had degenerated into a Tyrant) *with a rod of iron*, as soon *as brought forth, was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

The WOMAN fled into the WILDERNESS, and was in safety there. I know no better reason for our being informed of this circumstance, than that, when the *fortunes of the Church* are resumed, as they are in the xviith Chapter, we might know where to find her; and, as she was so totally changed, to know her likewise when we had found her. In this Chapter, therefore, the Prophet is led into the WILDERNESS, and introduced to her presence, *sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast*, under the title of *the* GREAT WHORE, and branded in the forehead, as was the wont, in stigmatizing common Prostitutes. Indeed her meretricious dress and equipage sufficiently shew how much she was *fallen from her first love.* She is stript of all the ornaments which she brought down with her from Heaven; and instead of being *clothed*, as at first she was, *with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars*, she is now arrayed in *purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls:* that is, Religion had now exchanged those divine gifts and graces, with which she was first adorned by the Holy Spirit, for worldly wealth and grandeur, to which she was arrived, by coming to a good understanding with her old enemy the *Red Dragon*, or CIVIL POWER: Of whom having received the trappings of Sovereignty, she soon after tore from him the Sovereignty itself.

A revolution

A revolution in her fortunes well expressed by her MOUNTING and RIDING the SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST, the same with the RED DRAGON; as appears from the like number of *heads* and *horns* bestowed upon the Monster under each denomination. Nay, to mark this identity the stronger, the CROWNS which were on the *seven heads* of the *red Dragon*, while he was Sovereign, and a Persecutor of the Virgin, are no longer found on the *seven heads* of the *scarlet-coloured Beast*, now deprived of Sovereignty, and become subject to the *Scarlet Whore:* Who having got the *Beast*, or degenerated *Civil Power*, at this advantage, rides him at her pleasure; and, like another Circe, gives him of her *Golden Cup, full of the Wine of her abominations, and filthiness* of FORNICATION, while she herself drinks *the* BLOOD *of the Saints.—The Kings of the earth* (says the Prophet) *commit fornication with the Whore:* i. e. in this impure mixture of the two Powers, *civil* and *spiritual* both become polluted; the *Civil* uses Religion for an engine of State, to support TYRANNY; and the *Spiritual* gets invested with the rights of the Magistrate, to enable her to PERSECUTE.

But if we attend to the Prophetic Language of St. John, we shall see more clearly the beauty of this representation. His language abounds in a mixed *phraseology*, formed on the different natures of the two Dispensations: And expressive of ideas belonging, sometimes to the one, sometimes to the other system. Each of these sorts the Prophet employs occasionally, as each best contributes to the force

force and elegance of his discourse. So here, *the Cup of fornication* alludes to the degeneracy of the Jewish; in which, the figurative name, for IDOLATRY, was *Fornication* and *Adultery.*—*The blood of the Saints* alludes to the distressed condition of the Christian; and more plainly signifies PERSECUTION *for Opinion.* These are the two great Reproaches of all Religion, natural and revealed: and each was the peculiar Pest, the one of Judaism, the other of Christianity. For IDOLATRY violates the very essence of the LAW, and PERSECUTION defeats all the virtue of the Gospel. These two infernal Tyrannies the Prophet represents as the Assessors of the SCARLET WHORE, now become Sovereign of the Earth.

But if we want to know the ingredients of this inchanted Cup, with which *the Inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk*, St. Paul will tell us. In his account of the *side-board* of the GREAT WHORE, he tells us, that "In the latter times some "shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to se- "ducing spirits, and Doctrines of Devils; speaking "lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared "with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and com- "manding to abstain from meats, which God hath "created to be received*." In which words the Holy Spirit graphically describes,—*the Worship of Saints—the fabrication of false Miracles—the invention of Purgatory, and the means contrived for escaping it—monkish and clerical Celibacy—Pagan fasts—and Jewish distinction of meats.*

* 1 Tim. iv. 1, et seq.

The

The last excess of the *Woman in purple and scarlet colour*, after having intoxicated all others, is the getting drunk, herself—*I saw the Woman* (says the Prophet) *drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.*—In *lies* and *hypocrisy* the *Whore* began her reign; and in PERSECUTION she filled up the measure of her Tyranny. Nothing now remained, but the coming vengeance of Heaven, when the TEN HORNS, or the Civil Powers of Europe confederated, *shall hate the Whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire* *. But this being an unfulfilled Prophecy, a matter yet in the womb of Time, we make no further use of it, than just, by quoting it, to cultivate and encourage a disposition in the RULERS OF THE EARTH, to facilitate the great work which Providence hath ordained to bring to pass by their ministry.

To conclude, I presume I have now performed what I undertook, (and it is all that is necessary for the support of the Protestant cause) viz. to prove, that ANTICHRIST and the SCARLET WHORE are a SPIRITUAL POWER; and therefore, no other than the POPE and CHURCH OF ROME.

One of the soberest as well as soundest Reasoners of this reasoning Age, who, free from the enthusiasm of party-zeal, carried with him to the study of Scripture all the Philosophic light and precision, which he had learnt of his Masters, LOCKE and NEWTON (who themselves employed the richest of their stores in the like sacred service) after having paid the closest

* Chap. xvii. ver. 16.

attention

attention to the predictions of the *Apocalypse*, hath, as the result of all, been bold enough to put the truth of REVEALED RELIGION itself on the reality of that prophetic Spirit which here foretells the desolation of CHRIST'S CHURCH AND KINGDOM by *Antichrist*; and the restoration of both to their original PURITY and POWER. "If, (says he) IN "THE DAYS *of St. Paul and St. John*, there was "any footstep of such a sort of power as this in the "world; or if there HAD BEEN any such power in the "world; or if there WAS THEN any appearance of "probability, that could make it enter into the heart "of man to imagine that there EVER COULD BE "any such kind of power in the world, much less "in the *Temple* or *Church of God*; and if there be "not NOW such a power actually and conspicuously "exercised in the world; and if any picture of this "power, DRAWN AFTER THE EVENT, can now "describe it more plainly and exactly than it was "originally described in the words of the Prophecy; "then may it, with some degree of plausibleness, "be suggested, that the Prophecies are nothing "more than enthusiastic Imaginations *."

* Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion, by Dr. S. CLARKE, Rector of St. James's, Westminster, p. 282.

DISCOURSE XXIX.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

1 Cor. xv. 17.

IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN; YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS.

THUS it is, the holy Apostle concludes, in order to *complete* the Proof of the Miracle of the Resurrection, which he had supported just before, from human testimony. "I delivered unto you "(says he) *first of all* that which I also received, "how that Christ died—that he rose again—and "that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. "After that he was seen of above five hundred "Brethren at once: of whom the greater part "remain unto this present; but some are fallen "asleep. After that he was seen of James; then "of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen "of me also, as of one born out of due time *."

Would we but give reasonable attention to Holy Scripture, we should find, that it not only affords

* Ver. 3—8.

us *Truth*, but likewise points out to us the *true way* of forming arguments for its support. Of which, these two passages of St. Paul, when laid together, are a signal instance: Wherein he hath intimated the *two conditions* requisite to entitle a MIRACLE to the claim of our belief; and shewn that *this* of the RESURRECTION hath those two conditions; which we may expect to find in every *Miracle* that God is pleased to work, and to recommend to our belief: that is to say, 1st, That it be of so high importance as to be even *necessary* to Revelation, and to the religious Dispensation to which it belongs. And, 2dly, That this abstract importance and necessity be realized by human testimony.

If common facts, actions within the verge of nature and human agency, come fully recommended to us by the attestation of knowing and credible witnesses, nothing further is required to win the assent of reasonable men. No one doubts that Augustus Cæsar taxed the Roman Empire, or that Herod governed in Judea, because historians concur to support these facts, and there is no improbability, in the nature of things, to call them in question. But in the case of *miraculous events*, the matter is widely different. The arrest and control of the laws of Nature, either mediately or immediately by their Author, is a thing which *uniform experience* hath rendered so extremely improbable, as to balance, at least, the best civil testimony. And why? —Actions within the verge of Nature and human agency, carry their visible *causes* along with them, or

at least we require none, as knowing they are *intrinsically* there. But, in acts miraculous, the immediate *efficient cause* is extrinsical, and consequently doubtful. And where men neither see nor perceive a *cause*, they conclude there is none; or, in other words, that the report is false. So that when the whole Evidence of a miraculous fact is comprised in human testimony, and that fact contrary to UNIFORM EXPERIENCE, the PHILOSOPHIC mind will remain in doubt.

But though, in all Miracles, the *efficient cause* be unknown; yet, in those which Revelation recommends to our belief, the FINAL CAUSE always stands apparent. And if that cause be found so important as to make the Miracle *necessary* to the ends of the Dispensation, we have all we can require to entitle it to our assent.

I can therefore conceive THREE CASES, and but three, in which a *Miracle*, offered to our consideration, can be thus happily circumstanced.

I. When it is worked as the CREDENTIAL of a Messenger coming from God, with some general Revelation to Man.

II. When it is worked, TO SECURE THE VERACITY of God's revealed Word, against an impious Power employing its authority, with a declared or professed purpose to convict the divine Declaration of falsehood.

III. When the SUBJECT of the Miracle makes SO ESSENTIAL a Part in the economy of the revealed

Dispensation, as that without this miracle the whole must fall to the ground.

Now, in all these *Cases*, where we discern a great, an important, and a necessary purpose for an extraordinary interposition, an attestation to the truth of a *Miracle*, by the same fulness of evidence which is sufficient to establish a natural fact, is sufficient to warrant our belief; who have the *moral attributes of God* to secure us from error. And here I presume I have fairly given what Dr. Middleton and his Adversaries called upon one another to give; and yet Both, in their turns, declined; viz. a CRITERION, to enable men to distinguish (for all the purposes of religious belief) true Miracles from false or doubtful. And no wonder they declined; for both Parties were in the Class of those of whom Seneca speaks—*Nesciunt* NECESSARIA, *quia* SUPERVACANEA *dedicerunt*.

The confining our belief of Miracles within these bounds, I apprehend, wipes away all the miserable sophistry of our pretended PHILOSOPHERS, both at home and abroad, against MIRACLES, from their being CONTRARY TO GENERAL EXPERIENCE IN THE ORDINARY COURSE OF THINGS. At least the *true Philosopher* thought it did, when he made that strict inquisition into Truth, towards the conclusion of his immortal Work.—"Though the COMMON EXPERI-" ENCE (says he) and the ORDINARY COURSE OF " THINGS have justly a mighty influence on the minds " of men, to make them give or refuse credit to any " thing proposed to their belief, yet there is ONE " CASE,

" CASE, wherein the STRANGENESS of the facts " lessens not the assent to a fair testimony given " of it. For where such *supernatural* events are " SUITABLE TO ENDS AIMED AT BY HIM who " has the power to change the course of Nature, " there, under such circumstances, they may be the " FITTER to procure belief, by how much the more " they are BEYOND OR CONTRARY to ORDINARY " OBSERVATION. This is the proper case of MI- " RACLES, which, well attested, do not only find " credit themselves, *but give it also to other truths,* " *which need such confirmation**."

Nor is the confining of the belief of Miracles within these bounds of a SUFFICIENT CAUSE, less beneficent to Revelation, than it is subversive of the PHILOSOPHY in vogue.

1. It will afford a strong mark of distinction between the *Miracles* claimed by the Revealed Religions we call true, and those pretended to be worked by the Deity, under Paganism; for I will venture to affirm, that none of those were supported by any thing that looked like *a sufficient cause.* The most illustrious of them, and which hath had the fortune to gain credit with some Divines, was the eruption at Delphi to defeat and punish the sacrilege of Brennus: Now, in this case, there was so far from being a *sufficient cause* for the interposition of the Deity, that there were *sufficient causes* why he should not interpose; such as rivetting men in their Idolatry, by a visible protection of the most celebrated

* LOCKE's Essay concerning Human Understanding, Vol. II. Chap. of the Degrees of Assent, Sect. 13. p. 286.

of all their Oracles; and inflaming their Superstitions, by persuading them that to dedicate immense and useless wealth in their Temples, was a matter pleasing to the Deity.

2. But principally, this restraint will give an immediate check to FRAUD and SUPERSTITION, in their full career to enslave a *believing World*, by the *prodigies* of ANTICHRIST, *whose coming hath been* (as St. Paul foretold) *after the working of Satan, with power, and signs, and lying wonders* *. How much this check is wanted to our nature, may be seen by that universal inbred infirmity of the human mind for the MARVELLOUS. This hath filled all ages with the monstrous births of Prodigies; in part conceived from our ignorance of Physics; in part from a wanton and indulged imagination; and in part from the pride of self-importance. However, certain it is, that Prodigies and Portents are the favourite as well as natural Issue of the uncultivated, the undisciplined Mind. And so great is the rage for that pleasure which the contemplation of MONSTROUS THINGS affords, that when we are no longer able, in a season more barren than ordinary, to delude ourselves in good earnest, the Mind takes a wonderful delight in imposing on itself in jest. Hence that exquisite pleasure, at present so fashionable to indulge, in the tricks of LEGERDEMAIN; which, if performed with more than ordinary dexterity, turns us round again to our serious delusions; and tempts us to hope that the Juggler, who so deals with us, may indeed deal with the Devil.

* 2 Thess. ii. 9.

But

But should it so happen, that this Performer of Wonders is less delighted with the honour of being thought a Conjurer, than they are with the pleasure of conferring it upon him, he has no way left, but to make his spectators as wise as himself, by revealing the secret resorts of his mystery. But from that moment the pleasure is at an end.

Who can wonder then, that in their serious hours they should be as delighted to find *Miracles* in the works of *Nature*, and as thankless to be undeceived?

- - - *Pol me occidistis, amici*
- - - - - *cui sic extorta voluptas.*

But when Religion is once of the Council, she takes the Delusion into her own keeping.—And the natural passion to *find*, meets with an equal, though less natural, passion to *supply* the MARVELLOUS: And while the Fabricator of false Miracles improves simple Knavery into PIOUS ZEAL, the enchanting pleasure of the delusion inflames natural folly into ENTHUSIASM. And the two parties now acting in Bodies *, and frequently changing hands, produce all that mischief of superstition and fanaticism, which, but for the dull pains of *Legendary Writers*, we should hardly have conceived possible to be effected.

For if men be so ready to *invent* a prodigy without any other motive than the honour of spreading

* Sane verissimum est, et tanquam secretum quoddam naturæ hominum animos, cum congregati sint, magis quem soli sint, affectibus et impressionibus patere. Bacon, Aug. Sc. L. 2. c. 3.

the wonder; What must be their industry in the Trade, when Religion hallows the Manufacture? And if, as hath been often seen, they not only find the *materials*, but form them into shape; that is, forge the Miracle under their own ministry: then their Persons become as holy as their Works: and their zeal to propagate the wonder rises in proportion to the interests of their own glory. If some be thus forward to *invent*, there are others as ready to *embrace* a FALSE MIRACLE. It sometimes sooths them in the errors, sometimes rivets them in the crimes, of their Religion. Now it supports them against an opposing Sect, and now again enables them to triumph in their Own. In the mean time, all agreeing that the Church once had this celestial Gift, and none knowing how they came to lose it, each Society of Religion concludes it to be still entailed upon them.

Thus we see how every disorderly passion of the human breast conspires to deform the fair face of Nature, and cover it with prodigies and portents. This, indeed, should make *Divines* cautious, but it should not make PHILOSOPHERS vain. For, even these great Personages know no more of nature than they see; and all they see, if not a *miracle*, is yet a *mystery*. For (as the Poet sings) they

- - - steal to Nature's Closet, and from thence
Bring nought but UNDECIPHER'D CHARACTERS;

Characters that will inform them no more of God's *natural*, than they do of his *moral*, Government. In the mean time, the DIVINE will be better instructed

in Both, if he be so wise to confine the belief of *things supernatural* within the bounds here pointed out.

But before I proceed to a farther consideration of them, it will be proper to explain a restraint to which this general Proposition must submit.

We have said, that MIRACLES, circumstanced as above, claim credit with every reasonable man. But from thence, we are not to conclude, that all *Miracles*, not thus circumstanced, are *false*.

But then, it may be asked, For what end or purpose were those worked, which have not the common belief for their *object*; a point seemingly essential to the use of Miracles; and without which, they appear to have been worked in vain?

The question is not impertinent, and will deserve an answer; which the following Case may possibly afford.

Jesus having chosen his *twelve disciples*, and given *them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease* *, sends them forth to proclaim the Gospel, under the following Commission—"Go "not into the *way of the Gentiles*, and into any "*City of the Samaritans* enter ye not. But go "rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "And as ye go, preach, saying, *The Kingdom of* "*Heaven is at hand.* Heal the Sick, cleanse the "Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils: freely "ye have received, freely give.—Ye shall be brought

* Matt. x. 1.

" before Governors and Kings for my sake, for a " testimony against them and the Gentiles. But " when they deliver you up, take no thought how, " or what ye shall speak. *For it is not ye that speak,* " *but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in* " *you* *."

In the execution of this work, the aid and assistance of two distinct species of *Miracles* is promised: *The curing their hearers of all diseases and infirmities*; and the *defence of themselves, by the Spirit of the Father speaking in them.* In the first, the Disciples were *Agents*; in the other, they were only *passive.* The first, as Credentials of their Mission, was objected to the belief of those concerned with their Message: The other was only of the nature of a promise and instruction to themselves; with which, no others having to do, it was not objected to their belief. From hence arose the difference, and not from the Missionaries being *active* in the one species of Miracles, and *passive* in the Other. For though the passive Miracle here was not thus *objective*, yet the like Miracle on the day of Pentecost *was.* The reason in each case is obvious: on the day of Pentecost, the Disciples *spoke with tongues*; which being a sensible Miracle, became their Credential; here, they only *spoke with discretion*, which they might do without a Miracle, and was therefore confined to their own use.

In this case, then, we have *a true Miracle not objective* to the belief of others: which yet, as we shall now see, was not worked in vain.

* From ver. 5th to 20th inclusive.

The

The Disciples, when sent out upon this Mission, had a very imperfect idea of the *Gospel*; and an absurd conception of the office of the *Messiah*. For the removal of their spiritual blindness, they were to wait (so the economy of the Dispensation required) till Jesus, on his *ascension*, should send amongst them the *Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things*. In the mean time, they were under the more immediate direction of their Master; who, occasionally, corrected their mistakes, as circumstances, in their attendance on him, made it necessary.

Amongst their capital Prejudices were the following—That the Gospel of Jesus concerned only the Jews, and the Orthodox Race of Abraham. In this error they would be much confirmed on the very opening of their *Commission*, which expressly forbids them to address themselves either to the *Gentiles* or the *Samaritans* *.

They were possessed with an Opinion, that the Jewish *ceremonial Law* was perpetual; as appears from the story of Peter's Vision.

They had no conception that the *reign of the Messiah* could be any other than a temporal Dominion; as appears by their addresses to their Master for Preferment, and by their squabbles amongst themselves for Superiority.

Overrun with these mistakes and errors, they were not to be left to themselves, when first sent from under the wing of their Master, who had enough to do to prevent the mischiefs † arising from them,

* Ver. 5, 6. † See Luke ix. 54—56.

even

even while they were constantly attendant on his person.

So that these men appear to be very unfit Instruments to *preach the Gospel:* As indeed they were; and therefore, on the present occasion, not employed in that service. For this their first Mission was not to *preach*, but only to *proclaim* the Gospel—*that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand**.

This was all they had to do. Yet having the *supernatural* power of working Miracles, *Credentials* which proved that what they had to say came from God, and being, at the same time, vain and presumptuous, the natural effect of their blindness, they would be strongly tempted to exceed their *Commission*, when called before Kings and Magistrates; and, instead of proclaiming the approach of their Master's Gospel, would be too ready to preach their own. Such was the danger: The difficulty of preventing it is apparent: Jesus, therefore, with admirable provision, forbids them to think of any studied defence in this critical juncture; for that they should be supernaturally supplied by the *Spirit of the Father speaking in them*†, with all that was fit and proper to be said on the occasion.

But then, it may be further asked,—"As this *Miracle* was worked only for the use of the Mission, and worked almost as soon as promised; What occasion for the previous intimation; or for having the intimation recorded?" To this I answer,

1st, A *promise made*, not only set their minds at

* Ver. 7. † Ver. 20.

ease

ease concerning the consequences of their predication; and gave them full liberty to attend to the principal part committed to their charge; but the *prohibition* accompanying it prevented their mixing the folly of their own mistaken fancies with the inspired Apology of the Holy Spirit.

2. The *promise was recorded* for an internal mark of the divinity of our Religion: with which *marks* the Holy Spirit hath, in great variety and abundance, adorned and supported the Sacred Scriptures, the only *Rule of Faith*. And by thus *recording*, it is now, indeed, become (what it was not at the time of working) the reasonable object of our belief.

And now to proceed to our general subject, and consider THE THREE CASES more at large.

I. First, "When a miracle is worked, as the CREDENTIAL of a Messenger coming from God with some *general Revelation* to Man, we may safely give it credit, as such a *Credential* is not below the occasion, but even necessary to accomplish the purpose intended."

To understand the NECESSITY of this *means* to so important an *end*, we must consider, That though, indeed, the *Miracle* is to be estimated on the nature of the Doctrines for whose confirmation it is worked; so that if the Doctrines be *worthy* of God, we may be assured (as his goodness will not suffer us to be navoidably led into, and kept in error) that such a *supernatural work* is the operation of his hands; and that, if *unworthy* of him, it is the delusion of men

men or other more malicious Agents: Though in this view, I say, the *nature of the uncommon operation* must be estimated on the *nature of the Doctrines*; yet the *immediate original* of the Doctrines (though not the *truth* of them) can be only known by the *extraordinary work* which doth, or doth not, accompany the publication of them.

For it does not follow, in any case, that what is simply worthy of God, comes therefore immediately, and in an extraordinary way, from him: because we know not to what heights of moral knowledge even the unassisted understanding may arrive. Nor doth our full experience, that all the Wisdom of Greece and Rome comes infinitely short of the GOSPEL, therefore prove, that the Gospel was sent immediately from God. We can but ill guess what may be produced by a studious Mind, assisted by a vigorous temperament, and happy organization of the body, when a variety of other aids, from the natural climate, and the civil state of Liberty and literature, concur.

The amazement into which Sir Isaac Newton's Discoveries threw the learned World, as soon as it was able to comprehend them, sufficiently shews what little conception it had, that the natural faculties of Man could rise so high, and spread so wide.

Indeed, when the divinity of the Gospel was thought to be proved; or, to speak more properly, when it was taken for granted; then, we accustomed ourselves to form a conclusion, such as it was, from the *experience* we had of its innate excellence, that this System could be only of divine Original.

Yet

Yet this, at best, is but what the Logicians call an argument *ad ignorantiam*. Strictly speaking, there is no ground of religious belief strong enough to bear so great an interest, but that which rises from MIRACLES, worked by the first Preachers of a new Religion, in confirmation of their Mission. *Miracles*, and Miracles alone, invincibly prove that that Doctrine, which was seen to be worthy of God, did indeed come *immediately* from Him.—Such was the sentiment of that great man *, whose words we have quoted above, on another occasion—" This " (says he) is the proper case of *Miracles*, which, " well attested, do not only find credit themselves, " *but give it also to other truths which* NEED " *such confirmation*."

It is true, that, to all this, it has been said, and, because it could not be proved, it has been said again and again, that we move in a vicious circle, when, 1. First, we prove the *Miracle* by the *Doctrine:* 2. And then again, the *Doctrine* by the *Miracle*.

And it is true, had I used the word DOCTRINE in the same sense in both Propositions, I had certainly committed this paralogism. But I have not done so. The *word*, in the first Proposition, signifies, *a Doctrine agreeable to the truth of things, and demonstrated to be so, by natural Reason.* In the second Proposition, the *word* is used to signify, *a Doctrine immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, revealed by God.* So that here is no vicious *return*, and nothing proved: It is the gradual *pro-*

* Locke.

cession

cession of two truths, till the whole argument be completed. They give, indeed, mutual assistance to one another; not by Either's taking back, when its turn was served, what it had given; but by Both's continuing to urge what they continued to hold, for their mutual support.

This Charge, therefore, against the integrity of the Reasoning, is founded in a gross mistake.

A mistake which has encouraged the same undesigning men to propagate another; viz. that *it is not Miracles, but the Natures of the moral and religious Doctrines*, in which the true Proof of their Divinity consists.

Into this absurd tenet, some (as we intimate) may have been betrayed by themselves; but the far greater part, I am persuaded, have designedly betrayed others: while they themselves saw the destructive consequences, and liked the Principles the better for those consequences. For, aiming to reduce CHRISTIANITY (which they professed to believe) to a mere REPUBLICATION OF THE RELIGION OF NATURE; this way of reasoning,—"The Doctrines taught are worthy of God, and "therefore are of God,"—affords as good a foundation for the REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, as it did for the first PROMULGATION of it.

Now CHRISTIANITY may be (I ought rather to say, is) understood in two senses; either as a REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature; or as the REVELATION of a new Religion ingrafted upon *that of Nature*.

Let

Let us see then how this argument stands, upon either foundation.

1. CHRISTIANITY, a REPUBLICATION of the Religion of Nature, is worthy of God; and therefore comes from him: i. e. is *true*, or *agreeable to the nature of things.*

2. CHRISTIANITY, a REVELATION of a new Religion, ingrafted upon *that of Nature*, is worthy of God, and therefore comes from him; i. e. is *true*, or *divine.*

1. The conclusion of the first Argument, from the *worthiness* of the Doctrine, that it is *agreeable to the nature of things*, we see, holds; and infers all that a REPUBLICATOR ought to infer from it; and, for the credit of his understanding, I will presume to say, is all he would have inferred from it: For, if Christianity were only such a *Republication*, it is reasonable to suppose, it was *republished* in the same manner that it was at first *published*; that is to say, by innate impressions, and abstract principles.

2. The conclusion of the second Argument, from the *worthiness* of the Doctrine, is impertinent and false; for the DIVINITY of Christianity, which the REVELATIONIST would have to be inferred from it, is not inferred.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, that the only solid evidence that a Doctrine, worthy of God, did immediately come from him in the manner pretended, is, that the Messenger of the new Religion had the CREDENTIAL of *Miracles* to produce.

And

And here, in confirmation of all that hath been said, let me observe, that Divine wisdom, on the propagation of a new Religion, hath so strictly appropriated *Miracles* for the *Credentials* of a Messenger sent, that JOHN THE BAPTIST, the Precursor of this Messenger, with tidings of his near approach, worked no Miracles. Yet had Miracles been only worked, according to a new-fangled notion, to make the Multitude *attentive*, no one had more need of Miracles than John the Baptist. But CHRYSOSTOM seems to have understood Revelation better than these modern Divines, when he supposes that even Jesus himself worked no Miracle till after his Baptism; i. e. till the time that he addressed himself to his Mission, and had need of his *Credentials*; and such a need it was, that he himself says of the unbelieving Jews, *If I had not done amongst them the works which none other Man did, they had not had sin**.

II. "The second Case, in which a *Miracle* is so circumstanced as to claim the belief of reasonable men, is, when it is worked to defend and secure the veracity of God's revealed word, against an impious blasphemer of it, who employs all his power to discredit and defeat it."

This is an occasion as important, and even more necessary, than *that* in the first Case. For though, without the attestation of *Miracles*, the Religion said to be intrusted to the first Teachers of it, can never be clearly proved to be an extraordinary Revelation from God, yet doth not that Want imply, in itself,

* John xv. 24.

the

the contrary. But in the Case in hand, the neglecting to interpose *miraculously*, when nothing but such an interposition can secure the honour of the Prediction, destroys all pretensions to the truth of that Revelation in which such Prediction is found.

Hence we conclude, that in this Case too, a *Miracle*, well attested by human authority, is one of the most legitimate objects of belief.

Of this kind was the supernatural interposition which defeated the malicious purpose of JULIAN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM. Here every thing concurs to make it a fit example of the Credit due to a Miracle of the second Class. — JESUS had foretold that the *Jewish Temple* should never be rebuilt: JULIAN was determined to give the lie to the Prediction. For this purpose, he employed every *means* that the Master of the World could put in use. Yet the design, after infinite preparations for the speedy accomplishment of it, was suddenly defeated, without any change in the purpose of Julian, or in that of the Ministers he employed. Of which no possible reason can be assigned, but what the concurrent, and at that time uncontradicted, evidence of Contemporaries and Eye-witnesses of the best credit, both Pagans and Christians, have given at large; namely, that when Alypius, Julian's favourite Minister, a man active, able, and determined, and bearing the same hate to the Christian name with his Master, had, by the imperial command, set himself to the vigorous execution of the work, in which he had all the assistance the Governor of the Province could afford him, horrible balls

of fire breaking out near the foundations of the old ruined Temple, did, with frequent and reiterated attacks, soon render the place inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; the victorious element continuing, as it were, resolutely bent to drive them to a distance, as often as they approached to renew their labour. So that Alypius, struggling in vain against this obstinate resistance, was at length forced, in very despair, to give over the Enterprise.

Now from this Miracle, worked by the Almighty himself, for the most important end, no honest man, without the highest unreasonableness, can withhold his assent. But this matter has been discussed at large*; and with such Evidence, that there would be no hazard in staking the whole credit of Christianity on its truth†.

III. "We come now to the third Case, where the subject of a *Miracle* makes so essential a part in the economy of the revealed Dispensation, as to give it its completion; the want of which would destroy the whole, and render it *vain* and *fruitless*."

* See a Discourse concerning the Earthquake and fiery Eruption which defeated Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem; in vol. viii. of this collection.

† I say this with the greater confidence, since, when this book, by command of a very eminent Personage in France, was directed to be translated into that language, for the use of the despisers of *Miracles*, the PHILOSOPHERS, as they are pleased to call themselves, these men promised their disciples a speedy confutation of it as soon as it should appear. It did soon appear: when their silence shewed no kind of disposition in them to keep their word.

This

This will be best illustrated in the *Miracle* of the RESURRECTION: which, because it will return us back to our text, and keep us there, will deserve a more particular disquisition.

Jesus, as hath been explained elsewhere, had a two-fold Character: the one, of a Messenger from God *simply*, with the tidings of salvation: the other, of a Messenger promised, under the title of the *Messiah*. His credentials, under each of these Characters, were MIRACLES. Those worked by him in his life, as Credentials, referred to *a divine Messenger simply:* that of the *Resurrection*, at his death, respected his other Character, of *Messiah*, or *a divine Messenger promised*. And the necessity of this *Miracle* may be seen even from hence, that the ancient Prophecies had foretold it.

They had said, on the one hand, that the *Messiah* should be exposed to afflictions and distresses; to all the miseries of life; and to a violent and untimely death. On the other hand, they had said, that the work should prosper in his hands; that he should triumph over all his enemies, and raise and establish an everlasting Kingdom. The contradiction in these accounts, if the promised Reign be understood as *temporal*, shews, it must be interpreted of a *spiritual* Kingdom in Heaven. But this latter could not commence while Jesus lay under the dominion of the Grave. He must of necessity, therefore, be raised, by the power of the Father, from the Sepulchre. And this is what St. PETER means, when, speaking of the Messiah, he says,—*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed*

the pains of death; BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT *.

Again, The very *nature of the Christian Dispensation* likewise required of necessity the *Resurrection* of Jesus from the dead. Christianity is the restoration of lapsed and forfeited Man, to life and immortality, from the power and dominion of Death. But the course of human nature continuing the same, after this restoration, which it held before; and Death still visibly existing, though it had lost its sting, there seemed to be need of some sensible evidence, to evince the truth of this entire change of the Order of things.

And this Restoration being procured at the price of the death and sufferings of Christ, sacrificed on the Cross; when the price was paid, and paid thus *visibly*, the nature of the compact demanded, that the benefit should be as *visibly* possessed and enjoyed; and both one and the other openly exemplified in the same Person. If the REDEEMER himself was not seen to enjoy the fruits of the Redemption procured, what HOPES had remained for the rest of Mankind? Would not the natural conclusion have been, that the expedient of *Redemption*, by the death and sacrifice of Jesus, had proved ineffectual? This is the conclusion which St. PAUL himself makes, in my Text, IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN; YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS: so necessarily connected, in his opinion, was *this Miracle* with the very essence of the Christian Religion.——*But now* (adds the Apostle)

* Acts ii. 24.

Apostle) *is Christ risen, and become the* FIRST FRUITS *of them that slept*; i. e. *His Resurrection* is the thing which both *assured* and *sanctified* all that were to follow. For the Jewish *first fruits*, to which the expression alludes, were of the *nature*, and secured the *plenty*, of the approaching Harvest.

Having thus explained the several natures of the THREE CASES, in which a *Miracle* will deserve the credit of all reasonable men; before I proceed further in the *last*, the proper subject of this Discourse, let me make one general observation that concerns them all.—In the *first case*, it is necessary that God, the Author of every arrest of Nature in its established course, should use the ministry of his Messengers in that service, since *Miracles* are the *Credentials* of their Mission. But in the *other two cases*, it seems more agreeable to the dignity of their several occasions, that the *Miracles* should proceed immediately and directly from Himself, as we see they did in the examples given of those of the *second* and *third class*: the defeat of Julian, and the Resurrection of Jesus, being both worked by his Almighty Hand in Jerusalem itself.

But, to go on again with the Miracle of the *Resurrection*, the *necessity* of which hath been fully explained.

Now, in matters of Religion, as that which is necessary in one view, is never without its *uses* and *expediencies* in another, permit me, in a few words, to illustrate this truth, a truth of so much importance, before I come to the *necessity*. The heathen World had a general notion of *another life*. But the RE-

SURRECTION of this mortal Body never once entered into their imagination. It is true, some modern writers have been misled to think otherwise, by an imperfect view of the famous STOICAL RENOVATION: which, however, was so far from bearing any likeness, or yielding any support, to the CHRISTIAN RESURRECTION, that it is absolutely destructive of it. The Sages of antiquity had discovered many qualities in the human *Soul*, which inclined them to conjecture that it might survive the Body. But every property they knew of *Matter* led them to conclude, that, at the separation of the two constituent parts, the Body was finally dissolved into the Elements out of which it rose. And that sect of Philosophy, which most favoured and cultivated the Doctrine of *the immortality of the Soul*, considered the Body only as its Prison, into which it was thrust, by way of punishment, for its pre-existent crimes; and from which, when it had undergone its destined penance, and purgation, it was to be finally delivered and released. Nay, so little did the Doctrine of the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY enter into their most improved conceptions, that when at Athens, the very seat of Science, St. Paul preached *Jesus and the Resurrection*, they took the second Enunciation to be, like the first, a new Divinity, a certain goddess called ANASTASIS *.

With

* This is CHRYSOSTOM's opinion of the matter. But BENTLEY tells us, that *they too well understood the notion of a resurrection, to think it a goddess.*—Which of the two Doctors was likely to be best acquainted with the genius

With all these prejudices, so unfavourable to the *resurrection of the body*, nothing less than the *assurance* of the best-attested *Miracle* in confirmation of it could have reconciled the Gentile World to the credibility of so incredible a Doctrine. This may be said with the greater confidence, since St. Paul himself, on this occasion, appears to have been of the same opinion. For when he had rectified their mistake concerning *Jesus and the Resurrection*, and had given them a precise account of the Doctrine of the Gospel, in which he explained to them, that the *resurrection* meant a *resurrection of the dead**, he adds —*whereof God hath given* ASSURANCE, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD†.

Thus hath this capital Miracle, the *seal of our Redemption*, all the evidence for its truth, which can arise

genius and state of Paganism, when St. Paul preached at Athens, must be left to the judgment of the Reader. This at least is certain, that the reason the latter Doctor gives, why the Athenians could not mistake *Anastasis* for a goddess, *because they too well understood the notion of a resurrection*, is a very bad one, since they had no notion of it at all, unless they mistook (which is very unlikely), as the learned Doctor seems to have done, the *Stoical renovation* for the *Christian resurrection:* or if they did mistake it, so gross an error could never hinder them from committing a less, the mistaking *Anastasis* for a goddess. They were undoubtedly well acquainted with many other *moral entities* (whatever was the case here); yet that did not hinder them from turning these *entities* into *goddesses*, whenever dire Superstition drove or invited them to seek aid from *new* Divinities.

* Acts xvii. 32. † Ver. 31.

arise either from its *necessity* or its use. It was proclaimed by the public decrees of the Father; and accomplished to verify the Character of the Son, and facilitate the progress of his Gospel. Causes so important, that we can conceive none more worthy the care of the Lord of the Universe; viz. than that what had been promised should be fulfilled; and what was now preached, should be miraculously confirmed.

After so strong internal evidence to prove it *right and fit to be done*, all that was wanting to establish it was the external, to prove it *actually done*. And this St. Paul, as we have seen above, pours out with a very liberal hand.

It hath been observed, that a *Miracle*, which would claim credit with us, must, besides the evidence of human testimony, (which it hath in common with natural facts) have a strong *internal evidence* likewise, containing the use, expedience, and necessity of the operation. But when once this *internal* evidence is given, it has the advantage of a natural fact, in the force wherewith the *external* concludes.

I will explain my meaning.—When the Witnesses to a common fact vary, in unessential circumstances, from one another, it is sometimes, though not always, a diminution to its credit. For human testimony being that on which alone it stands, whatever impeaches that, weakens the credibility of the fact. But, in an act *miraculous*, the first ground of its stability being its *internal* Evidence, when human testimony hath realized that, such variety takes

takes little from its credit, which stands upon those two supports: the testimony that the thing was done, resting on the strong foundation, that it was fit and necessary to be done.

So far as to the difference which arises from the nature of things. Another arises from the situation of the Reporters.—Witnesses to a miraculous fact well understand that the ground of its credit lies in the fitness and necessity of the thing. Such Witnesses, therefore, when recording their own knowledge, will be naturally more indifferent in arranging circumstances; from the want of which, a variation amongst several Witnesses to the same fact often arises. While those who speak to a common fact, knowing all its support consists in the veracity of their evidence, will be more intent to preserve their credit, by a studious attention to the numeration and order of all its circumstances.

This will shew us the unnecessary pains which some late Defenders of *this Miracle* have taken, against the attacks of Infidelity.—Licentious Writers thought they had discovered some discordances or contradictions in the evidence of the four Evangelists concerning it: Jesus (as they say) after his resurrection appearing, by the testimony of this Evangelist, at the same moment of time, to one person, and, by the testimony of that Evangelist, to another person: an objection that might seem to have weight against a fact standing only on the foot of a natural adventure, and having no reasons of necessity or convenience to support the testimony.

Now these defenders of Religion took the case as their

their Adversaries were pleased to give it to them; they confined themselves to inquire into the represented fact, as if it had been one of a mere civil kind, and supported only by *external evidence*, the testimony of witnesses.

No wonder such defences should be, as in reality they have been, very unsatisfactory. Whereas, had the Advocates of Religion first inquired into the nature of the fact, and shewn, that one that is miraculous, and has a claim to our credit, stands on a wider and more complicated basis than mere human testimony; that this of the *Resurrection* in particular is thus supported; that it rises on the strong foundation of Necessity; that is to say, that it fulfilled the Jewish Prophecies, and completed the Christian Dispensation; had they done this, I say, the difficulties springing from these minute differences, in the sacred Historians, with regard to the precise time and place of Jesus's several appearances after his resurrection, would have vanished and disappeared; and the dignity of the Evidence for the Christian Faith would have been secured from the dishonour of its being forced to stoop to the low and trifling criticisms on words and phrases, often involved in dark and intricate nothings: then, I say, these Defenders would have seen that St. Paul hath chalked out a better and nobler, as well as shorter and clearer Demonstration of this important truth; who, when he had said, in the words of my Text, *If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*, adds, *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.* And having

having thus by *internal* evidence shewn the necessity of the Miracle, he realizes the fact *externally*, by a *cloud of witnesses*, but given with becoming dignity, in the gross,—" He was seen of Cephas, then of the " twelve. After that he was seen of above five hun- " dred Brethren at once: of whom the greater part " remain unto this present; but some are fallen " asleep. After that he was seen of James; then " of all the Apostles," &c.

TWO
CHARITY SERMONS;

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

AND

THREE
SERMONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS;

FIRST PRINTED IN THE QUARTO EDITION
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SERMON XXX.

Preached before the Governors of the Small-pox Hospital, in 1755, and published at their request.

PSALM xli. 1, 2, 3.

BLESSED IS HE THAT CONSIDERETH THE POOR —THE LORD WILL STRENGTHEN HIM UPON THE BED OF LANGUISHING: THOU WILT MAKE ALL HIS BED IN HIS SICKNESS.

WHEN the observance of God's commands, under the *Jewish* Law, was rewarded with *temporal* blessings, the sanctions of that Law were so divinely adjusted, that the various duties, and the various rewards annexed unto them, had a beautiful analogy, and bore a fitting relation to one another.

Thus a zeal for the interests of their God and King was rewarded with the *possession of the promised land:* observance of the sabbatical rest, with *fertility and abundance:* duty and obedience to Parents, the immediate authors of our being, had the *promise of long life:* and pity and compassion to the Poor is here said, in my text, to bring down the extraordinary comfort and support of Heaven in our bodily infirmities, finely expressed, by *God's making*

making all our bed in our sickness: And how proper and adequate this reward is to the performance of the duty, we may understand by considering, that POVERTY is one continued *languishing* and *sickness*; under which the heart becomes faint, the spirits depressed, and the body in continual restlessness which gives no intermission from anxiety and pain. How then could the abundance of Divine Goodness more fitly reward him whose bounty ministers kindness and consolation to wretches languishing under extreme poverty, than by easing and refreshing their Comforter, when, by the general lot of humanity, he, in his turn, lies labouring under bodily infirmities?

Indeed both POVERTY and SICKNESS reduce humanity to such a state, as serves to detect the miserable debility of our nature, and the perfect equality in wretchedness amongst all who partake of it; which the accidental circumstances of fortune in a few only disguise and varnish over for a time; and while health concurs with affluence to delude us into an opinion that we are placed above the common disasters of our species. But every fit of sickness dispels this gaudy vapour, and lays bare the helpless condition of humanity, when we are least able to endure the sight.

So powerful an enforcement to charity and compassion did the Law of *Moses* afford its followers! Nor are we to suspect that the Gospel of Jesus is less efficacious in its sanctions. For though that extraordinary Providence which administered temporal blessings, in so large a measure, to the *Jewish* people,

people, has been long since withdrawn; yet we are not to think that God, in his present disposition of worldly matters, *leaves himself without a witness*: or that his gracious Providence does not incessantly interfere, though with less outward pomp, yet with no less real efficacy, to reward the good and to punish the wicked, even in this present life: For, as the apostle *Paul* may well be understood, *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And if any virtuous practice has a better claim than other to the title of *Godliness*, it is charity and compassion to the Poor; in which we aim, though at infinite distance, to imitate the Creator in our care to ease and relieve the wants and distresses of his creatures.

I shall therefore beg leave to enforce this duty from the single consideration of my text, that charity and beneficence to the Poor are the surest means of alleviating the pains and miseries of a sick bed, by procuring the hand of God *to make all our bed in our sickness:* in which emphatic phrase the *Psalmist* alludes to that miserable circumstance of a sick-bed, a perpetual restlessness, which makes us throw our disquiet on the hardness of our bed or couch.

Of all the distressful calamities to which Man's life is subject, SICKNESS is the most afflictive. All the other disasters of humanity, such as captivity, persecution, exile, slighted affection, calumny, and slander, receive their sharpest stings from fashion, habit, and the unruly passions: and we have generally the cure, always the alleviation, within our-

selves: constancy, patience, and the exercise of reason, may subdue them; and an artful diversion of the mind to other objects easily evades their more violent attacks. But bodily infirmities, attended with pain and depression of spirits, are entirely out of our power to redress. They keep the mind irremissibly tied down to a contemplation of its miseries, without respite and without relief; while every tormenting pang becomes the dreadful monitor of our approaching dissolution. Wealth, power, wisdom, and the attachment of those connected in interest or friendship with us, may remove or alleviate the other calamities of life; but SICKNESS remains deaf and inexorable to all these powerful emollients. The Fever burns on; the Stone tears its way; and the Hectic continues to sap and undermine the fortress of life, regardless and in defiance of our friends, our patrons, and our physicians. Torment, distress, and anxious dread of the event, exclude all comfort and consolation. Nothing but the *Lord of Life* himself can aid us in this dread hour, nothing but his Spirit can assist and support us in this mighty conflict. And the man whose lenient hand and sympathizing heart has accustomed him to feel for the lesser distresses of his fellow-creatures, is, by the unerring word of Truth, assured that he shall have this assistance in his greatest. *The Lord* (says my text) *shall make all his bed in his sickness.*

This assistance shall be afforded him by different ways, and in different measures.

Oftentimes the hand of God will effect a speedy cure:

cure: either by so strongly supporting the mind, as to lend its vigour to the body to throw off the malignity of the distemper; or by so powerfully enlightening the physician, as to teach him to assist Nature in the recovery of itself; or, lastly, by putting some sovereign remedy in his way, whose specific virtue was ordained, and without his aid, to conquer the obstinacy of the distemper. The history of mankind is full of instances where this extraordinary relief hath been afforded: where the languor of the mind has been fortified; where the usual blindness of the physician has been removed; and where the most unpromising remedies have afforded an instantaneous cure.

And when, for the wise ends of Providence, whether physical or moral, the chronical disorder becomes incurable, or the malignant distemper proves unconquerable, *then* will great comfort and consolation be afforded to the charitable man, *upon his bed of languishing*; the hand of God will administer balms to his wounded spirit, and cordials to his weak and languishing body. At this time it is that the good man will most sensibly feel the comfort of that blessing promised in my text, to *have all his bed made in his sickness*.

But the strongest support the Spirit of God administers to such a one on his *bed of languishing*, is the testimony of a good conscience, which comes divinely impressed upon his mind in a lively review of his past good deeds, with a still more animating prospect of the approaching reward; the prospect of those eternal mansions just ready to open to him when

the rage and malignity of perishable matter shall have done its worst. Held up, and supported by this assistance, the torment of present pain subsides, and the terrors of approaching death recede before him. And now it is not He, but the World and all its miseries, which die away; while the Saint is reviving and springing up to life, and immortality. It is not the King of terrors he now approaches, but the Lord and Saviour of the world, who receives him with that gracious acceptation of, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.*

In conclusion, a greater excitement to our bounty, a greater encouragement to our compassion, could not possibly be afforded, than the reward here annexed to our duty.

Sickness is an evil to which every individual of the human race is hourly exposed. All the other disasters of time or fortune, men may flatter themselves by their situations to escape. Wealth secures them from want and penury; Power, from insult or oppression; but no advantages of station can secure them from sickness and disease. Nay, those very advantages, by inducing evil habits, do but the more contribute to hasten the mischief, and to render it inveterate. What encouragement to our duty, therefore, can equal that which promises relief in those distresses, the most intolerable in themselves, to our nature most obnoxious, and which no circumstances of fortune can either prevent or redress?

Nor is the reward less adapted to the state and

condition

condition of those to whom it is afforded. It is addressed to the rich and powerful, to those who are best able to relieve penury and distress. But amongst those it is, that LUXURY, the parent of Disease, makes its greatest ravages. So that if the great were to choose their own reward, they could not fix on any thing of more peculiar use or benefit to themselves.

But if Providence so largely rewards the kind relief of simple Poverty, How will the blessing be accumulated on him who still more humanely seeks out for the object of his benevolence from amongst those who, together with their poverty, lie oppressed under the additional load of sickness and disease! Here he will be sure to find the mercy, not only returned in kind, but returned in more abundant measure; and while he is so divinely intent to ease the poor man's *bed of languishing*, he is preparing for his own; and decking it up to become, even when pain and torment threaten most, a bed of ease and rest unto him.

And the well-advised believer, who considers that the Prophet annexes the blessing in my text, not so much to the bounty of the hand, as to the deliberate benevolence of the heart,—*blessed is he that* CONSIDERETH *the Poor*—will be very careful in seeking out, and exploring the most proper Object of his charity.

But was such a one to seek through the world for this purpose, it would be hard to find a subject, in all its circumstances, so eligible as the excellent Establishment for the relief of distressful poverty,

which I am now intrusted to recommend to your protection.

For the objects it comprehends and is confined to, are those who labour under one of the most dangerous and afflictive maladies to which human nature is exposed: not of such as are acquired by our follies or our vices; nor yet of such as any degree of care and circumspection can avoid. A mischief rising, not from within, by humours let loose by intemperance, which destroy the balance between the fluids and solids; nor yet from without, by the contagion of unlawful commerce, which corrupts and vitiates the whole frame; but a kind of pestilence that resides and reigns amongst us through the malignity of infectious bodies or a corrupted atmosphere, or perhaps of both: and is what, in the humble language of piety, we call the *hand of God*. In a word, a calamity, where there is not one circumstance to abate our compassion, and a thousand to excite and to support it.

Such is the nature of the first, and as I suppose, the original part of this noble Charity.

But to those generous minds who are more intent upon public than private interests, and who think the duty of universal benevolence better discharged by beginning with generals, and descending to particulars, than by rising from particular to general good, I would in a more especial manner recommend the other part. For they are distinct; and the kind encourager of this Charity may direct his beneficence to either part, as he is most disposed.

The part I mean is that for INOCULATION: the safety

safety and prodigious benefit of which has been long experienced and fully confirmed by careful applications of it on the Rich; and is now, by the glorious humanity of this Establishment, extended to the Poor.

And as it is INFANCY and YOUTH, amongst which this dire calamity makes its greatest havock, the protecting these stages of life from its ravages, is the most essential service to the Public. For, according to a famous saying of Antiquity, *The loss of Youth is to the State, what the loss of Spring is to the Year*; the cutting off that flowery season which prepares Nature for the fruits and harvests that are to follow from it.

Indeed, if what we are told of the original of this happy invention be true, it is not so much humanity and charity, as gratitude and a debt, to put the Poor into a capacity of enjoying this blessing. For from the Poor, it seems, the Rich first received it: indeed from a people which may not improperly be called a *Nation of Poor*; namely, the *Georgians* and *Circassians*, the most miserable of enslaved Provinces; as lying in the frontier of two great despotic Empires.

But those of you, my Brethren, of still more enlarged conceptions, who delight in rooting out SUPERSTITION, as the bane not only of Religion, but of Civil life likewise, will have here a noble occasion to exercise the generosity of your natures. For, by what strange fate it is I know not; but so it has happened, that, at a time when *Religion* has lost almost all its influence on the minds of the People,

yet *Superstition* still keeps its hold; and this most beneficial practice is regarded with abhorrence by them, as a kind of impiety, a tempting God, and mistrusting his general Providence. Now the best confutation of such monstrous absurdities, is the success of the practice, in which (while twenty or thirty die out of one hundred and fifty, who contract the distemper in a natural way), only THREE *, out of Six Hundred and Ninety-three which have been inoculated since the erection of the Hospital, have fallen under it.

Give me leave to add another circumstance, which seems to be of weight to excite the attention of the well-disposed: and that is, that as its funds consist chiefly of annual and voluntary contributions, it will always need the repeated assistance of the benevolent. And this circumstance, which awakes charity, will serve to fix and determine the object of our choice; for we may be reasonably well assured, that while a public Charity remains in this condition, it will be carefully and honestly administered; that which makes its existence precarious, securing its well-being. The Governors of Hospitals, which so subsist, being rather Stewards than Trustees to the Public. And to what scandalous abuses of trust largely endowed Hospitals, whether of new or old foundation, have been exposed, is too well known to

* Of those THREE, *one* died by *Worms*, though he was not suspected to be so disordered when inoculated; and *another* was apprehended to have first caught the Distemper in the *Natural Way*.

be

be further insisted on in this place, where the subject is not concerning their reformation.

Indeed, it appears almost superfluous to urge this consideration. For whoever casts his eye on the list of illustrious and honourable Names in the government and direction of this CHARITY, will be convinced, that there needs no other favourable circumstance to preserve it under a prudent, diligent, and faithful administration, than the nobleness and generosity of their own respectable Characters.

Permit me, therefore, my Brethren, as I am directed by my office, and reminded by my text, to *charge you who are rich in this world, that you be* READY *to give, and* GLAD *to distribute; laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. Amen.*

SERMON XXXI.

Preached before the Governors of the London Hospital, in 1767; and published at their Request.

1 CORINTH. xiii. 13.

—THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.

I SHALL not, at present, stay to consider the grounds and reasons of the preference here given to CHARITY above all the other Christian Virtues. Nor is such an inquiry needful, since the obvious nature of *Charity*, as it signifies UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE, shews, that it must needs be at the head of human Virtues; *Universal Benevolence*, which prefers the good of the Whole to any of its parts, being of the essence, as it is the end, of all Virtue.

If I should venture to prelude what I have to say on this occasion, by observing, that *Benevolence* is the characteristic Virtue of ENGLISHMEN, I might, perhaps, be thought to flatter a People now fatally overrun with Vice and Impiety.

But justice is due to all; and may be paid with honour as well to ourselves as to others; as well to our Friends as our Enemies. So that, with a fair boast,

boast, I may repeat it, " This sovereign Virtue is native to us, and our own; and the fantastic Follies, now most in fashion, are of foreign growth, and imported from abroad."

As soon as ever England had broken asunder the chains of Ignorance and Superstition, our National Benevolence began to shew itself, and kindle into warmth. The objects most intimate and pressing, naturally became, in the order they arose, the successive care of this sovereign Virtue.

Hence it was, that the interests of PURE RELIGION, the thing most productive of human happiness, first awakened, and continued to excite our whole attention; till we had thoroughly defecated the celestial fountain of FAITH from the poisonous dregs of ROME. This noble labour occupied English Charity throughout the whole period between EDWARD the VIth and JAMES the Ist.

The next object of this benevolent spirit was CIVIL LIBERTY, the Daughter of *Religion*, and, after her, the most prolific of earthly blessings. For this, the generous Englishman long toiled: and, by a vast expence of blood and treasure, at length secured for his Posterity—For his Posterity do I say? Or should I not rather say, for the human race in general? This glorious struggle for the service of mankind began under JAMES the Ist, continued long, and was happily ended under WILLIAM the IIId.

Our native Benevolence having thus provided for the WHOLE, in the security of those two capital blessings, RELIGION and CIVIL LIBERTY, now turned its gracious aspect upon the PARTS: and the

SUFFERING

SUFFERING Poor, ordained by Providence to bear the heaviest burthens of society, engaged their first and principal concern.

Then *Charity-Schools* for the education of youth; *Infirmaries* for the relief of the diseased; and *Hospitals* for the solace of old age; soon overspread this happy Island. And in these beneficent labours hath this Godlike Spirit been employed, from the reign of William III. to this present time.

Thus uniformly hath our native Charity kept opening and widening through several ages, till it embraced and took in all the great Objects of Universal Benevolence.

How perfectly this spirit got possession of the frame and faculties of Englishmen, may be seen from the most trifling, as well as from the most important circumstances. We may collect it from the very words of our language: ALMS-GIVING having, by a conversion of terms peculiar to the English tongue, usurped the very name of CHARITY. A plain indication of what our Forefathers felt to be the *motive*, and what they understood to be the *genuine motive* of ALMS-GIVING.

One principal branch of this sublime Virtue, which I am now intrusted to recommend to your favour and protection, are public Infirmaries for the disabled Poor.

But as a retentive purse is ever ingenious in starting objections, sometimes to the *manner of giving*, and sometimes, again, to the *utility of the gift*; it will be incumbent on me previously to remove

remove both the one and the other of these obstructions.

We will begin with certain religious scruples to public and open contributions of this nature, from a text of Scripture ill understood, and worse applied. *When thou doest thine alms* (says our Blessed Master) *do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do—but when thou doest thine Alms, let it be in secret.*——Now this precept is greatly mistaken when it is understood to be an *exclusive direction*, how and in what manner the duty of alms-giving should be performed; as that its merit consisted in its being *done in secret*; and that it lost all its virtue when it came to the general knowledge of men. On the contrary, the Precept is only an *information* (given, indeed, by way of *direction*) concerning the *disposition of mind*, necessary to make the Giver's Alms acceptable before God. The true meaning of the text being precisely this——"*Be* " *not as the Hypocrites*, who, devoid of all *benevo-* " *lence*, and actuated either by superstition, self- " interest, or vain-glory, or perhaps by all of them " together, *seek only the praise of men*; and there- " fore *sound a Trumpet before them*, to proclaim " their alms. But when thou addressest thyself to " the performance of this duty, let UNIVERSAL " BENEVOLENCE possess thy soul, as knowing that " though thou *bestow all thy goods to* FEED THE " POOR, *and have not* CHARITY, *it profiteth thee* " *nothing:* and knowing this, thou wilt naturally " and without affectation (when thou art not called " upon, on a proper occasion like the present, *to let*

" *thy*

" *thy light shine before men*) *do thine alms in secret.*
" Not that doing them *openly* or in *secret* makes
" any difference in the merit of the action itself;
" but that the sound of a flawed and faulty heart
" generally accompanies the *Trumpeter*'s procla-
" mation; while the action of the *silent giver*
" modestly whispers the integrity of his purpose.
" Otherwise, when UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE hath
" got possession of the heart, then Alms *done openly*
" must needs be best pleasing to our Heavenly
" Father; as the Example spreads abroad the
" Spirit of Benevolence, and each *open giver* catches
" the sacred fire from another, till the whole Offering
" arises in one pure blaze of Charity, an Holocaust
" of the pious Heart to Heaven: as on the other
" hand, when it is superstition only which stimulates
" thee to this paltry sacrifice of *the praise of men*,
" thou wilt only add to the nullity of the action,
" the offence which accompanies its nature."

The second objection is of a civil nature; *the legal provision for the Poor* is objected to the necessity, if not to the utility, of these new and *voluntary establishments*.

But when the origin of that *provision* comes to be considered, it may possibly be seen, that these *new establishments* are the best means of removing the inconveniencies, which, in a course of time, have arisen from that beneficent, but ill-judged policy, of *providing for the Poor by law*.

Before the times of common sense and Reformation, a still-increasing superstition had brought an immensely disproportioned share of the landed

property

property into the hands of Churchmen and other religious. But lands in *Mortmain* are a dead weight upon Commerce; which rarely rises, and can never flourish under so unfavourable an aspect. This, for many ages, filled the nation with beggars. Indeed *begging* was the only Commerce it had. And it throve so well, and grew so fashionable, that whole *Orders of Religious*, when they had beggared others, turned beggars themselves; and, after despoiling the rich, did not blush to share the Alms with the Poor.

In this general distress, the wealthy Monasteries opened their gates to a miserable starving people: who, being first reduced to indigence by the *Religious*, were afterwards supported by them in idleness; till an *Abbey-Lubber* became the common name for one of the Monastic Leeches. And while Laymen seemed to have forgotten the plainest civil truth, *that Necessity was the mother of Invention*, Churchmen were successfully inculcating the greatest of religious absurdities, *that Ignorance was the mother of Devotion.*

When HENRY VIII. dissolved the *religious Houses*, and, by that means, restored civil Property to the uses of Commerce, the immense revenues which came into the Exchequer were soon dispersed and dissipated; partly in support of the measures of that daring Revolution; partly in the ill-judged projects of his childish ambition; and in part, in the indulgence of his luxurious pleasures.

But so clamorous were those Drones, the *Abbey-Lubbers*, on the destruction of their hives, that the

Crown found it necessary to insert in its grants of alienation, an express condition of *Hospitality*; which had no lasting effects; for now, the emancipated Church-estates perpetually changing hands, the charge upon them of Hospitality was soon forgotten or disregarded.

In the mean time COMMERCE, under the genial warmth of *Property in motion*, began to make its first struggles for birth. Trading Companies were formed; distant Voyages were attempted, and new Worlds discovered.

But Infant-Commerce is weak and feeble; and its hands unapt for Manufactures, the perennial source of national wealth: so that still a numerous *Poor* remained untaught and unfed.

The glorious administration of a Woman, who took up her father's reins, after they had been slackened, first by Faction, and then by a returning Superstition, was intent to supply both these wants by Law. But unskilful measures in providing against distress, soon took off the edge of Industry. And the law, which quarters the Poor on their several parishes, grew, in time, so intolerable a burthen, both on the landed and commercial Interests, and so difficult to be shaken off, that the Legislature hath now employed more than an age in seeking for the proper remedy, and hath not yet found it.

In this *inability*, the best relief, though it can operate but slowly, are these voluntary new-erected *Establishments*, entirely formed and addressed to encourage *industry*, by providing a speedy cure to the maladies and disasters of the disabled Poor.

From whence it appears, that the *legal provision* is so far from being an objection to their continuance, that an increase of them is the only means we have, at present, of putting some stop to the growing mischiefs of that *provision*.

Thus we see how civil Policy and religious Charity concur in favour of these *new Establishments in general*. What remains, is only to recommend to you the object of our present care; an Establishment, that (like all other of the same kind which have the Poor for their subject) doth honour to humanity: and, by the peculiar nature of the Institution, hath the advantage of being most beneficial to a commercial people; as taking in all *Labourers for the Public*, whether by SEA or LAND; whether disabled by accidents, or debilitated by disease. For, against these necessary Servants of Society all the elements seem to have conspired. They seize the *Workman and Artificer* at home; sometimes by the baleful qualities of the materials on which he is employed; sometimes by the blasting heats of furnaces and forges, in the midst of which, the process of his artful industry, in giving form and fashion to those tortured materials, is carried on; and sometimes again by the damps of mines, and the rotten exhalations of woods and marshes, to which, in his useful labours, he is unhappily confined. They pursue the *Sailor* abroad; and the very air necessary to a prosperous course, becomes destructive of his constitution; now by a load of corrosive salts; and now again by the change of climates in extreme, made unfit for respiration.

Such

Such are the objects of this noble Charity; to which no motives of recommendation, whether divine or human, can be wanting.

I. If we seek them in RELIGION, Solomon is at hand to tell us, *That whoso hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord*:* And a wiser than he assures us, that what we do to our distressed brethren, will be reckoned as done to himself: Our gracious Master being pleased to exalt and enoble ALMS *to the Poor* into OBLATIONS *to himself.*

And though, from the attributes of the Godhead in general, we can well account for so honoured an acceptance of human alms; yet there is another reason, peculiarly relative to the present dispensations of Providence, which will explain the high encomium here bestowed upon this Virtue.

In social and civil life, under Government political, (which God declares † to be his *ordinance* as well as man's) the far greater part of those whereof it is composed are, by the inevitable order of things, condemned to a state of labour, distress, and penury. The Common Father of mankind has therefore graciously condescended to consider himself as responsible for the relief and support of all in this humble station; and, on this account, hath earnestly and particularly recommended them to the care and protection of the *Rich*; to whom, as to the *Stewards* of his bounty and abundance, he hath *intrusted*, rather than *given*, the goods of this world: Goods, which GOD, at first, created unappropriate; and NATURE threw in common to all her children.

* Prov. xix. 17. † Rom. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

Indeed, we can never sufficiently adore the Father of mercy, who in the tenderness of his Providence, hath thus set to his own account, whatever is disbursed by these his *Stewards*, upon such, who by reason of the wants which *his own Ordinance* hath occasioned, are under his more especial care and protection.

II. If, in the second place, we seek our motives in the bosom of HUMAN VIRTUE, these *Stewards* of God's bounty, the *Rich*, will never want reasons of *humanity* and *justice* towards their Brethren, as well as of *piety* and *gratitude* to their Lord and Benefactor, for the ready and cheerful discharge of their *Trust*; when they consider that the lower ranks in society (on whom distress and penury are fatally entailed) had this hard measure assigned unto them by Providence, that the *Rich* might enjoy the Blessings of social life in greater plenty, in a more improved condition, and in fuller security, than they were even at first poured out on man from the lap of God's prolific Substitute, NATURE: For, to the toil, the ingenuity, and the ready habits of the hardy *Poor*, both by land and water, are owing the abundance and stability of those *artificial accomodations* which society procures. So that were it not for the constant toil of the Labourer, the Sailor, and the Artificer, the man most indulged in the wanton gifts of fortune would soon find himself, in the midst of all his proud connexions, as ill accommodated in his person and in his domestic, as a savage Indian Chief amidst his wastes and desarts.

III. But,

III. But, thirdly, if neither piety, humanity, nor even the interests of luxury and commerce, have force sufficient to open either our hearts or hands in favour of those who impair their health and shorten their lives in destructive toil and hazardous adventures, to provide for our ease and pleasures; we should consider, how our very SAFETY (in the peace and order of society) is concerned in this soothing relief, thus beneficently afforded to the poor distressed.

One of the most marvellous circumstances in the life of that inconsequent prodigious creature, Man, is, that the Populace in all governments can feel, and yet do so patiently abide and groan under toil and penury; distresses sustained by the *Many*, for the support of the *Few* in insolence and riot.

The force of human laws alone is insufficient to account for this dead calm in the most furious and impatient of all wild creatures, *Man in distress*.

The Populace were never able to comprehend either the *nature* or *end* of National Laws; their *use* to the whole, or their *necessity* to the several parts; and, therefore, could have no forcible inducement to pay them reverence. On the other hand, they were never so stupid as not to understand that *human laws*, like a thread of flax before a flame, vanish and disappear before popular commotions.

What is it, then, do you ask, that hath so long restrained this fierce and agonizing part of Civil Society, in which all power really resides; and from

which it is fetched, by their Rulers, to be employed against themselves? What is it, do you ask, that first tamed brutal Man, and disarmed the fury of an enraged multitude, and hath ever since restrained them, while murmuring under so unequal a partition of the free blessings of Providence, from using this power in their own quarrel, to shake off their burthens, to reassume the *Commonalty of Nature*, to level all the boundaries of Property, and throw social life into disorder and confusion? What could it be, but the powerful charm of RELIGION? A charm which makes the Laws sacred, and the Supreme Magistrate adored.

But now, RELIGION having lost its hold on the Populace, (amongst whom a new set of Opinions hath been inculcated to encourage their practices) some *Succedaneum* will be found necessary to supply its place, till it can regain its usual force. And what so natural and efficacious as these NEW ESTABLISHMENTS, the first-fruits of CHARITY; which, in the absence of FAITH, and during the loss of HOPE, may supply their place, and restrain the madness of a desperate people? For while they see the higher stations in society thus condescending, and even proud to discharge the office of their Guardians, zealous to make their distressed condition sit as easy on them as the nature of Society will permit, and the tenderest pity can procure, the Commonalty will be reconciled to their station; and, though neither oversatisfied, nor perhaps over grateful, will yet cease, in any turoulent way, to malign the happier lot of those who bend their care

and

and employ their wealth, to drive away want and distress from the habitations of the INDUSTRIOUS Poor.

Now, would we regard our *new Establishments* in this view, we should have a sufficient answer to the *Objection* arising from the growing multiplicity of them.

They are, we have shewn, a *Succedaneum*, and the only one we have, to that great bond of Society, RELIGION: a *partial* extension of it, therefore, will hardly be sufficient. The Charity must spread and enlarge itself till it encompasses the *whole*, in order to enable it to supply the place of that natural and more efficacious *tie*, RELIGION, now loosened in most parts, but quite shattered and broken in that where its strength was most needful, I mean, the *Populace*.

But this is not all: these Establishments *abound* in their uses; not only such as are public and general, which have been already explained, but private and particular likewise, as we shall see.

Where every good man is his own almoner, compassion is always readier to bestow, than prudence and circumspection to distribute. It relieves labouring humanity when we ease an object in distress. But the judgment (whenever we condescend to be governed by it) always withholds its assent, till the object appear *worthy* our care and attention. And were the judgment more consulted, we should not, at this very hour, have virtuous compassion, by a false pity, so much abused, as to become, instead of

a blessing, a public mischief; as it is in the relief of common vagrants and street-beggars.

The charitable rich man is, as we have said, the *chosen Substitute* of God, to supply what, in the common course of his Providence, hath, for wise reasons, been left imperfect and deficient. It is of his office, therefore, to satisfy justice and mercy, in the support of distressed Virtue, before he allows the tender sentiments of a constitutional compassion, to administer to the alleviation of suffering vice.

For these reasons, we shall, if we be wise as well as pious, make these *public Charities* the Treasuries of our private Alms; as being well assured, that what is there lodged will be dispensed in such a manner as may best advance the national interests; may best serve the sacred ends of Religion; and best satisfy our own bountiful and humane disposition.

And if, amongst these various *Establishments*, there be some whose principal objects are the wretches, who, by their vicious and intemperate appetites, have brought disease and misery on themselves, even these may fairly plead our pity, since they catched the infection of their immoral habits from the depraved Example of their *Betters*.

But the distinguished *Charity*, which I am at this time to recommend to your protection, is of a very different nature. It is, in a word, the most humane, most useful, and most deserving the attention of all good men; as it is best calculated to produce the satisfactory and salutary purposes which

the wisest *Establishments* of this kind profess to aim at.

A still further inducement to support these Charities is the present state of the *Public Manners*; which are seen by all to be in so profligate a condition, as to require some atonement for insulted Truth and violated Virtue. The most natural indeed, and efficacious, is the amendment of our lives and reformation of our vicious habits: yet, while that is working (and it is always a work of time) as there is apparent need of some intermediate deprecation of the wrath of Heaven, we are unable to conceive any more acceptable service to the God of mercy and compassion, than the relief of his favourite Creature, *Man*, struggling under the rigour of his wise and necessary Dispensation.

But then let no superstitious fancies, that our habitual vices may be indulged under the ample cloak of Charity, defeat these hopeful means of a beginning reconciliation with our offended Master. For though *Charity* or *benevolence* hides the faults of *others* from the severity of our censure, yet *Charity* or *Alms-giving* is totally unable to conceal *our own* from the observance of our all-righteous Judge. Indeed, the only cover for these, or, to speak more properly, the discharge of all their stains, is FAITH, is the BLOOD of Christ, working with *repentance* towards God. When FAITH, when the BLOOD of Christ, hath thus done its perfect work, and brought forth *repentance*, then we shall not be mistaken in concluding that one of the noblest fruits of *repentance* is of the growth of THIS ESTABLISHMENT; in giving

covering

covering to the naked, in dispensing food to the hungry, in pouring balm into the wounds of the afflicted, and administering cordials to the sick and languishing.

May this be the constant employment of this humane *Establishment!* and may the God of all Mercies prosper its generous Undertakings!

SERMON XXXII.

Preached before the King, at Kensington, October 27, 1754.

CHRIST'S LEGACY OF PEACE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, xiv. 27.

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.

THE blessed Founder of our Faith, to shew us the superiority of the advantages which Religion offers to his faithful Servants, bequeaths to them this inestimable Legacy of *Peace*.

All temporal good results into one or other of these two blessings, *Pleasure* and *Peace*. The *first* more strongly solicits the *sensual* appetites; the *second*, the *intellectual*: *That* strikes more forcibly on the *fancy*; *this*, on the *understanding*. *Pleasure* is the early and single object of the young and dissipated: but *Peace* is the harbour of the wise and experienced.

experienced. In *Pleasure*, the pursuit of happiness is generally *begun*; and in *Peace*, the pursuit of it as generally *ends*. For the *organs of sense*, being the instruments through which *pleasure* is conveyed for the mind's enjoyment, they are soon put out of order by excess; or rendered unfit by long use, for the discharge of that part of their functions. For by abuse, or unremitting use, the body becomes so disordered, or the mind so insensible, that *pleasure* degenerates into pain, disgust, or indifference. And the Mind, fatigued in the fruitless search of happiness, finds at length that it is no where to be had but in *peace* and tranquillity of mind.—And in the *enjoyment of peace*, the mind becomes gradually strengthened and fortified; as in the *exercise of pleasure*, it is more and more debilitated and broken.

For *peace* repairs all the faculties of the mind, just as *pleasure* wears them out. And age and time, which take off all the vigorous sense of pleasure, add still a new taste and relish to inward *peace*: The mind which, during its hurry and violent attachment to pleasure, overlooked the sweet allurements of *peace*, being, by the subdual or subsidence of the more violent passions, now become attentive to, and sensible of, the soft and gentle impressions of tranquillity.

Our blessed Master therefore could not bestow, at his departure, a richer Legacy on his faithful Servants, than this of *inward peace*: the security and reward of Virtue, and the balm of the *wounded spirit*.

But

But as the *Giver*, so was the *gift*, *Divine*. And though a *temporal* good, yet so purified, ennobled, and exalted by Religion, as to accompany us through these dark regions of sorrow (over which it throws a constant sunshine) and to pass with us to the celestial realms of joy and immortality.

But there is an impostor, a Counterfeit of this *Peace*, which restless and overburthened mortals are always seeking for in vain. This Phantom is ever flitting before us, and assuming a variety of Forms to engage the pursuit of the mistaken follower; who, when he thinks to hold her in his grasp, finds nothing but empty air; though Fancy have embodied it in all the specious shapes of *wisdom*, *power*, *wealth*, *reputation*, *glory*, and every gaudy Form, which draws deluded mortals to seek for *peace* amidst their *miseries*.

To these Counterfeits our gracious Master alludes, when he distinguishes the *genuine blessing*, which is his gift, from these wretched inventions of Men. *My Peace I give unto you*; *not as the* WORLD *giveth, give I unto you:* Words that imply an immense difference both in the GIFT and in the GIVER.

Let us first then consider, What that *Peace* is which the World promises to bestow upon its Votaries; and where it is to be found.

The *World* would think it strange, if we should deny that *peace* is to be found in what it calls *wisdom*, *power*, *wealth*, *reputation* and *glory*. Yet it is certain, that, when sought for amongst *any* or *all*

of these, no more is to be found than the mere *shadow* of peace; and, generally, not *so much*.

Human *wisdom*, or science, bids fairest to content the *reasonable mind*; because the object of knowledge is *nature*, and the object of the fairest branches of knowledge, *human nature*, whose perceptions and ideas it attempts to trace; and whose passions and appetites it pretends to regulate: yet, wanting those principles, discoverable only by *Revelation*, which teaches man's *true end*, and which excites his endeavours to the attainment of it, human knowledge only fluctuates in the *head*, but comes not near the *heart*, where peace of mind is engendered. While the whole state of the *Sage* or *Man of Wisdom*, though set off with all the trappings and gaudy equipage of Letters, is a state of anxiety and disquiet, of doubt and disappointment.

If *peace* then keep at such a distance from worldly wisdom, we can hardly think she will become more intimate with *Power* and *Grandeur:* where, instead of restraint on the passions and appetites (which *Wisdom* attempts) every thing concurs to raise and inflame them. Now inordinate and irregular appetites are the immediate *bane* and destruction of *inward peace*.

But it is not only from *within*, but from *without* also, that *peace* is violated by *power*. In the pursuit of *Wisdom* all our Concurrents are our Assistants, and sometimes our Guides and Directors. And every Rival's acquisition is an addition to our own store. But in the pursuits of *power* it is just

the

the contrary: All our Concurrents are our Enemies: every advantage of theirs throws *us* farther back from the point we had in view: and *their* successes prove fatal to our own projects. For *corporeal* good is, in this, essentially different from *mental*; it lessens by communicating, and suffers an exclusive appropriation. And as the rivalry for corporeal advantages is, for this reason, as well as others, always more violent and constant; the Candidate for *power* has generally but a small share of *peace:* for the same struggle continues as constantly, and often as violently, *after* the acquisition of Power as *during* the pursuit of it.

Riches, the next pretended means of *Peace*, are still less efficacious to procure us this blessing.—If wealth be attended with the avarice of *hoarding*, it so narrows and contracts the mind as not to leave sufficient entrance to *Peace*; or at least that entrance is so guarded by *anxiety* for the present, *fearful apprehensions* of the future, and *mistrust* of every thing about us, that Peace flies frighted from so inhospitable a dwelling.

And if the rich man *employs* his wealth, as wealth is *commonly employed*, it brings on a large train of uneasy wants, and unruly appetites; which, as oft as they are relieved, are succeeded, in an endless succession, by *new wants* and *returning appetites*; every one more absurd and fantastic, more mischievous and unnatural, than the other. So that there is no interval for *peace* to get footing in a mind so agitated, distracted, and disappointed, by the *solicitation*,

solicitation, the *variety*, and the *emptiness* of its objects.

But it will be said, that *fame and glory*, sure, if nothing else, will amply afford this *peace*. And, indeed, if any worldly Charm could sooth and lull the soul into this sweet Elysium, it must be the sense of this high prerogative of humanity. And it will be owned, that as the other advantages tend to *contract* and *narrow* the mind, so *Glory* as naturally *dilates* and *enlarges* it; and, by that means, prepares and fits it for the reception of this soft felicity: For all *perturbations* arise from the *uneasy narrowing the mind by selfishness*.

Yet if we consider how *worldly fame and glory* are *commonly* acquired, we shall find, that there are some circumstances attending it, which must for ever keep peace a *Stranger*, or at least a very *precarious* Guest.

Eloquence, *Civil Policy*, and *Military Honours*, are the three great entrances to Glory. Yet how oft is the one employed in defence of falsehood and wrong; the other in the arts of circumvention; and the third amidst the horrors of unjust conquest! But these matters are best left to every man's particular meditation.

On the whole, we see what a delusion it is which the world presents unto us, when it pretends to give us that greatest blessing here below, *inward peace*.

But as empty, and as *trifling* as the *present* is, even under its *best* form, it becomes still more worthless by the *caprice* and *injustice* of the *Giver*.

For

For these advantages, by which peace is supposed to be obtained, the World distributes with such injustice, with so little regard to true merit, that we generally find them shared (indeed not equally) by the worthless and by the deserving. Nor is there less caprice and inconstancy in the *continuance* of the world's favours: which, as it often gives without desert, as often resumes and takes away without cause. So that, even though *peace of mind* were *indeed* dependent on its smiles, the possession of this *peace* would be the most *precarious* of all things.

The Sages of Antiquity, who made the most diligent inquiry after this *peace*, were forced at last to confess this supreme blessing of humanity was not to be found without the aid of some *Celestial Guide*.

At that juncture, when the Guide was seen to be most wanted, he was sent by our Almighty Father, with all the heavenly attributes of *Grace* and *Peace*; who, having completed his ordained Ministry; to prepare his followers for the reception of this gift, and to direct them how to preserve and improve it, when it was bestowed, left them with the divine farewell of my text: *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

This *peace* consists in a full and pleasing consciousness of pardon and restoration to God's favour, through the blood of his Son, on our sincere repentance.

The immediate Giver of this Peace is the *Holy Spirit*. Hence, in reference to the *mysterious conveyance*, and the *supernatural fruits* of the Gift, it is called a *peace that passeth all understanding*. That is, such a *peace* as humanity is not able to procure for itself; or to preserve when procured, without the assisting grace of God's Holy Spirit.

And now we may be able to see the immense difference there is between this *peace*, and that which the world pretends to give, both in its *nature* and *duration*.

The Passions and Appetites are the deadly bane to all tranquillity of mind: and these, *this peace* totally subdues, by submitting *our will* to the *will of God*. In the mean time, our full assurance of *favour* with *him, our supreme good*, fills up the *great void* of the mind; which now enjoys, and is greatly affected with, nothing but its own conscious content, tranquillity, and joy.

Again, this solid blessing is given, not as the world pretends to give its wretched Counterfeits; that is, *capriciously, unjustly*, or *precariously*.

As this *Peace* dwells only in the mind purified by the love of God and Man, and hatred of iniquity; so while the mind continues in that state, its *peace* is as lasting and solid as the foundations of the earth.

And whatever casual pollution the good man may contract by presumption, negligence, or commerce with an evil World, which may abate or disorder *inward peace*; For this, the Gracious Giver has contrived an instant and efficacious re-

medy, *sincere repentance:* by which all the breaches in our peace are repaired, and the heavenly tranquillity of mind restored to its full vigour, through the *mediation* of our Blessed *Lord and Redeemer*; —to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be all glory for evermore.

SERMON XXXIII.

Preached at Lincoln's Inn, November 11, 1759.

INIQUITY THE CAUSE OF UNBELIEF.

ST. MATT. xxiv. 12.

AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD.

THESE words are to be found in the famous Prophesy of Jesus, in which the predictions of his *first* coming to judge the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem; and his *second* coming to judge mankind, in the destruction of the World and renovation of all things, are interwoven with one another.

And in these words is foretold that general apostasy from the *Faith*, of which the Sacred Writers have so frequently forewarned the faithful, as the characteristic mark of the *latter times—The love of many* [the adherence of the greater part to the Faith] *shall wax cold:* The *cause* of this apostasy is foretold likewise, *because Iniquity shall abound.*

 This

This melancholy but important truth may be supported by considerations drawn, 1st, from the *nature of things*; and, 2dly, from the experience of our own times.

Though nothing be more common than to see men's opinions and practices at variance; because the *judgment* draws one *way*, and the *passions* another; and because, generally, men are neither masters of one nor of the other, to take them up and lay them down at pleasure; and so have it not in their power to suit their opinions to their practices, or their practices to their opinions, as they see fit: yet this contrariety and opposition is a very uneasy situation; and the more so, from the difficulty of removing it. Hence the various arts and contrivances of the *wicked heart*, to delude itself, in procuring a set of principles, that may support Men, at least give them no uneasiness, in their practices.

But if the received principles or opinions (such as those of the Christian faith) not only shew the falsehood, the folly, and the absurdity of vice; and that it is not only destructive of our rational nature *here*, but of our very being *hereafter*; then the wicked man, who is resolved not to part with his vices, and yet finds himself crossed and disturbed by these opinions, which he had imbibed in his education, and afterwards approved in his judgment, will never rest till he has *perverted* that judgment, by sophistical reasonings against the *truth* of his opinions. And sophistical reasonings, at best, even when seconded by a willing mind, always carrying their

their suspicions along with them, the self-deluded victim to his vices is still for trying their force upon his acquaintance, in order to establish them more firmly in himself. Hence that preposterous zeal, observed in modern unbelievers, for making converts; which has always appeared to pious observers so extremely monstrous; but which, we find, has a very obvious cause in the very nature of infidelity itself.

Thus we see, how truly *Iniquity* is assigned as the *cause* of that general *apostasy*, from the Christian faith, predicted to be the Character of these latter days. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

And here, before I proceed to my second head, it may not be amiss to observe, how much this check upon vice is to the honour of the Christian Faith; a check so great, that vice cannot proceed in its course, till this obstruction to it be removed. In the Pagan and Mahometan Religions, both of antient and modern times, wicked men were never under this necessity: nor have we ever heard that they quarrelled with their Religion, because they wanted to enjoy their vices in peace. Their opinions and practices subsisted together in a very friendly manner. And we find, much nearer home, that those men who have quarrelled with their baptismal Faith for the sake of their vices, profess themselves to be the followers of *natural Religion*; which being what each man pleases to make it, it is very easy for them to prevent its becoming *troublesome* to

their vices; and is therefore a very *commodious*, as it is a very *reputable*, profession of Religion.

But I now anticipate the subject of the second head I proposed to speak to in support and explanation of my text; which was, that the experience of the present times amply confirms its truth, that *abounding of iniquity* is the true cause *why the love of many* for the Christian faith *is waxed cold*: or of that general defection from Christianity which has now spread itself throughout all orders and degrees of men.

A mere *general view* of the state of things is alone sufficient to evidence this truth. When was there so great a defection from the Religion of our Forefathers? And when did profligate iniquity so much abound? The estimate of the *quantity* of national vice is indeed hard to make. But this we may be assured of, that when *Vice* stalks triumphant, and without disguise; when apologies are made for the national benefits resulting from private vices; and when it is openly maintained that Government cannot be carried on without *corruption*; we may be assured, that *Vice* has spread more generally, and has taken deeper root, than while it sneaked about in disguise; while it denied its Parentage, and pretended to be related to *Virtue*.

But we have a surer evidence of the truth of my text. We need but look about us, and consider who have been the most zealous propagators of Infidelityt hroughout this present Century; and who have been their most devoted followers; and we shall

shall find that both have been as notorious (whether in high stations or in low) for vice and *corruption*, as for the profligate principles of *unbelief*. So that there was small danger of being mistaken, when we *saw* a man *glorying* in his Iniquities, to conclude that he was a *Rogue upon Principle*, that is, a Freethinker: as on the other hand, when we *heard* a man profess his disbelief of the Religion of his Country, that he was a *corrupt Knave*, whether in a public or in a private Station.

Even great learning and superiority of parts, the best security, next to *Grace*, against Infidelity (and what has in fact secured the generality of exalted geniuses against this contagion) if unhappily joined with a very *corrupt heart*, have not been of force sufficient to guard men against this evil. So much has their present ease and the silencing of a clamorous Conscience got the better of all the convictions of Reason.

To this it may be objected, that many wicked men have professed the highest regard for religion: as, on the other hand, some unbelievers have been very moral men.

Both these assertions will deserve to be considered. There is no question, but that through *various* stages of wickedness, so *rational* a Religion, in which men have been brought up and educated, will stick closely by them. But the horror of this state, which the constant upbraidings of conscience must occasion, makes them naturally fly for ease and respite from their torments: If *grace* abounds, they will be enabled to shake off their *vices:* If the

the *World* prevails, they will choose to part with their *Religion.* Distracted by such contrary impulses, it will not be long ere they part with one or the other: and the over-abounding of *wicked example* encourages worldly men, in general, to make a wrong choice. This is the condition of the first stages of life: but it being a very *unnatural* state (men *naturally* pursuing ease) we may be sure, it will not continue long. Whenever therefore an old determined veteran in vice perseveres in the *profession* of a Religion, which denounces the most dreadful sentence on his perseverance in Iniquity, and pretends a *zeal* for *this* Religion, we may safely pronounce him to be a consummate Hypocrite. And if we attentively consider, we shall never be at a loss to account for the trouble he gives himself, in putting on, and still wearing, so hazardous a mask. We shall find it to be either his *profession,* his *station,* his *connexions,* or some *lower personal Interest,* that obliges him to profess his attachment to religion. Or if haply these marks be difficult to find, there are others, which never fail to betray this species of Hypocrisy. Such as these, this pretended Religionist always makes the *truth* to be the same thing with what happens to be the *established.* He therefore joins with the *real Bigot,* to discourage all inquiries into truth, and is the first to decry and persecute the Inquirer.—And so much for the *Religion* of the *habitual* Sinner.

As to the other part of the objection, *that some Unbelievers have been moral men.* This will amount to no more than an *exception to a general rule,* which

which says that Unbelievers are commonly wicked men. And the causes which produce the *exception* are easily accounted for.

Unbelief has of late become so fashionable, that its advocates have formed and fashioned it into a kind of system, and supported and adorned it with all the arts of sophistry and false reasoning: so that it would be no wonder if, here and there, a moral man of cool appetites and enfeebled reason, seduced by specious appearances, should chance to do credit to this miserable Philosophy. This, joined to a vanity of doing honour to a sect (so much and justly spoken against by sober men, for the *immoralities* of its professors) may possibly produce a *moral free-thinker*. But such a phænomenon is extremely rare: So rare, that, of all our leaders in Infidelity (and England has produced a greater swarm than almost all the world besides), we hear but of one or two, who ever passed for honest men. And the man who had this luck, though he got the character of temperance, justice, candour, charity, in his commerce with the world, yet it is well known to all who have seen his writings, that in the management of controversy he has knowingly violated both truth and charity.

On the whole then, we cannot but conclude with the text, that *because of the abounding of Iniquity, the love of many*, for our holy faith, *has waxed cold.*

But we are not to expect that these *apostates* will own that *Iniquity* is the *cause* of their apostasy. They

They have always assigned other causes of it, which in their opinion clears them from all suspicion of unjust prejudice or prevention. And these are,

1st, The immoral and unexemplary lives of the Clergy. And,

2dly, The irrational system of Christianity.

Let us examine both these pretences.

They will not believe the truth of the Christian Religion on account of the unsanctified Lives of its ministers. But what has this to do with the *truth* or *falsehood* of a Revelation established upon full evidence, evidence which has nothing to do with the personal Character of its ministers? Was irresistible Grace promised, by this Religion, to them, something might be said for so absurd a conclusion; which infers the falsehood of a Religion from the follies of its Pastors. But since they continue men, as other men are, as well *after* they have devoted themselves to the service of the altar, as *before*, and liable to all the common infirmities of humanity, no conclusion can be drawn from their personal discredit, to the discredit of that Religion which they so unworthily serve.

Again, as to the irrational and absurd tenets of the Religion itself. It is certain no such could come from God. And if our Religion teaches that such did come from him, this were fully sufficient to discredit it. But our free-thinkers should have been *assured* of what they say, by a careful study of the Scriptures

Scriptures themselves, before they advanced so heavy a charge against the Religion of their Country. And so doubtless they would, had not the prejudices arising from their *Iniquities* made them very *desirous* that Religion should be a false and fictitious thing; and therefore they received *any thing* that came to them under the name of *Christianity* (so it would serve their purpose to decry and dishonour it), without examining whether it was the *genuine Gospel* of Christ, or no; nay, under a strong suspicion, and sometimes, a sure conviction, that it was not. The truth is, they knowingly give us the doctrines of *Men* for the doctrines of *God*; and then, from the absurdities of *sects* and *parties*, of *sums* and *systems*, argue against the truth of the *Gospel*. I said, *knowingly*; for, at other times, when they have been disposed to abuse the Clergy, they have produced these very doctrines as *their* adulterate manufacture; which, when they argued against Religion itself, they called the *doctrines of the Gospel*. What are we then to conclude from this conduct, both with regard to their objections to the *ill lives of the Clergy*, and to the *absurdity of the Christian tenets*, but that they were ashamed to own to others the *true cause* of their *Infidelity*, and for their own ease would even endeavour to hide it from themselves; and, in its stead, would obtrude upon us other more *specious* causes; which yet are in themselves so inconclusive, that, but for the reason above, they would not have ventured to build upon them so important an affair as that of their own salvation. If these men therefore would persuade us that they

are,

are, as they so loudly proclaim themselves, sincere inquirers after truth, let them, by way of experiment only, cast off their vices, reform their lives, and conform a little to the moral precepts of the Gospel: and if then these formidable objections against Revelation still wear the same face, and do not shrink into nothing, we will believe them to be honest and sincere; which, to believe *before*, would be an *excess* of charity, that even the benevolent Genius of the Gospel would not excuse, or support.

The conclusion and inference from the whole is this, that it is infinitely to the discredit of modern infidelity, and as much to the honour of our holy faith, that it is *Iniquity* which makes unbelievers. For how miserable must that Cause be, where the true reason of their rejecting Revelation is one of the marks of its truth, namely, the vengeance of Heaven against vice and immorality! No one can think, had this Religion only offered Rewards for *Believers*, that ever there would have been such a thing as an Unbeliever; and yet this would have been a certain mark of its falsehood, as it is of the Mahometan and other superstitions. But as soon as ever it proves its pretensions from Heaven, by pronouncing misery to Vice, as well as happiness to Virtue, *then* the world begins to swarm with Freethinkers.

On the other hand, what can be more for the honour of a Religion, than that it drives from it all determined wickedness, as not able to bear the splendor of its visage; especially when we consider that

that this same Religion, so terrible to hardened Vice, bears the most benignant aspect to a repentant sinner, whom she invites to her bosom, and to whom she communicates all her comforts and consolations?

Let therefore such who have been so unhappily deluded by their sins as to rivet them into their nature, by a fatal *Unbelief*, view and contemplate this *rejected Religion* on this side, where with so much pity and compassion she throws out her arms, to recover these her deluded Children from final perdition. The frequent contemplation of this would, with the Grace of God (always at hand to assist the honest endeavours of men), at last enable them to break their fetters, recover their liberty, and return again into one fold, under one Shepherd, *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. Amen.

SERMON XXXIV.

Preached before the King, March 12, 1769.

TRUE CHRISTIANS, THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

MATT. v. 13.

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH: BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING, BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT.

OUR Blessed Master hath here, in an happy union of scientific and popular instruction, arising from the joint aid of the sentiment and the expression, supported a particular truth on a general principle.

The *particular truth* is, that the loss of the *Salt*, or genuine spirit of Christianity, cannot be supplied by any human expedient whatsoever: and it is

supported on this *general Principle*, that every thing hath its *Salt* or essential quality, which makes it to be what it is; and, without which, it is no longer the same, having degenerated into another thing.

Much of our blessed Master's instruction pointed to future corruptions in his holy Religion; for at the time when he first impregnated the world with, what he here calls, *the salt of the Earth*, there could be little danger of its *losing its savour* during that generation.

The observation was made to be *recorded* by the sacred Penmen; that when this *loss* or decay of *savour* should arrive, we might *remember* (to use his own words) *that he had told us of it.*

And it is one of the miserable Prerogatives that we, the Ministers of his word in these latter ages, have to boast of, above our happier Predecessors, that we are able to illustrate the divinity of our holy Faith by the completion of many Prophecies, which foretold the degeneracy of the Christian Church.

But though I shall not forget the *particular Truth* inculcated in my Text, yet it is my purpose, first of all, to shew from the *general maxim* on which it is supported, that the gracious warning, contained in the observation, holds good with regard to every state and condition of human life, as well civil as religious; that where the *Salt* or essential quality of a thing, that which constitutes its being what it is, happens to be lost or depraved, nothing can prevent the destruction of the subject in which that quality resided: no succedaneum, no adventitious

tious quality, having the virtue or efficacy to supply its place.

To explain my meaning by the trite example of the *Body-natural*, employed, on all occasions, to illustrate the various fortunes and situations of the *Body-politic*.

In the human frame, the essential quality of the eye is its capacity of vision; of the ear, to receive and modulate sounds; of the palate, to distinguish savours; and so of the rest. Now when the qualities appropriated to each organ of sense are lost or depraved, we find it impossible for their functions to be discharged, or their defects to be supplied by any succedaneum whatsoever. The vitiated part must for ever lie useless, till the mischiefs attending the cessation of its functions end in the destruction of that body which such parts were formed and designed, by the divine Architect, to serve and support.

Just so it is in the several orders and stations of Society; which are the members, as it were, of the great Body-politic.

Suppose then the *Salt* or essential qualities of one of these members be *Frugality and Simplicity*; of another, *Learning*; of another, *Wisdom*; and of the twofold Body itself, in one part, *Love of our Country*; in the other, *Piety*: When all, or any of these, no longer operate by their respective faculties, the common Body to which they belong will soon fall into a consumptive decay.

This serious and melancholy truth our divine

Master hath plainly intimated, in that elegant figure of *Salt which hath lost its savour.*

I shall therefore first endeavour to explain the importance of his words, as they are founded on the *general Principle*, in their more enlarged and general sense: By which you may understand the helpless condition of *Society*, when any of its capital members are deprived of their essential qualities. So that, in whatsoever part you find this *Salt to have lost*, or to be in danger of losing, *its savour*, you may hasten to restore it, or to preserve it in its natural state, instead of hoping by quack inventions to supply its place.

I. To begin with the PEOPLE. The *Salt* of this gross Body, that by which it is kept sweet, are modesty, industry, parsimony, and simplicity of manners.

How far these qualities now make, or mark, the characteristic of the People, we all see.

Instead of that *modesty*, by which the English Populace, till of late, have been so advantageously distinguished, a censorial spirit, not of their hearts but of their heads, hath got possession of them. They erect themselves into Controllers of the conduct of their Governors; they prescribe laws to the Legislature; and rise in tumults against the sentence of Public Justice. In prosperity, they are insolent; in adversity, outrageous. A People turbulent and servile; mutinous and corrupt; impatient in want; improvident in abundance; and equally unawed by the uplifted hand of Heaven and the Magistrate.

That

That *Parsimony and simplicity of manners*, which had long supported their station in ease and credit, are now lost in the distresses attending luxury and riot. Hence, mad factions, and criminal associations, which shake, and threaten to overturn, the very foundations of Society.

And now, wherewith shall this *unsavoury* Body be *salted?* They are ready to tell you, with that air of Sovereignty which they have assumed,—By their large and extensive Commerce; that spring-tide of Riches; which they believe (if they believe in any thing) will set the shattered Vessel of the Commonwealth, now stranded by these wretched Pilots, once again on float.

But this gilded pageant will only add to our disorders. For a flow of wealth, which, regulated by the essential qualities of a virtuous People, would have set all to rights, will serve only to extend the luxury, to encourage the dissipation, and to inflame the insolence and riot of a lawless crew of miscreants.

II. The MINISTERS OF RELIGION acquire their honoured character from their LOVE OF TRUTH, manifested in the cultivation of GOOD LETTERS. And none have surpassed the English clergy in the glorious exercise of these essential qualities. They rose to that distinction, and, indeed, they could rise no otherwise, by the mutual aid which those two qualities imparted to one another.

Now if ever the *Salt* of this sacred order should become vapid (which Heaven avert!) by a coldness

for *Truth* and an indifference for *Letters*, one may easily guess what contrivances will be employed, and to how little purpose, to preserve appearances, when the virtue and efficacy of things are lost.

An affected MODERATION will try to soften, when it cannot warm, that rigid *coldness*; and a blush of MODESTY will be assumed to animate that lifeless *indifference*. But these painted virtues will not bear the weather: this *moderation* will fade and betray the pallid hue of IGNORANCE; and this *modesty* soon appear to be only the varnish of SCEPTICISM.

Now though counterfeits do, in the very act, bear testimony to the excellence of the genuine qualities they usurp, (and we know that MODESTY commonly attends, and always adds a lustre to Truth; and MODERATION best recommends the *Teachers* of it to the world;) yet counterfeits can never supply the place of those Virtues they have dispossessed.

III. MINISTERS OF STATE, next to Ministers of Religion, deserve our highest reverence. Their *Salt* or essential qualities are WISDOM and GOOD FAITH. On these the success as well as justice of public measures depend. These make them beloved at home, and confided in abroad. Such have been those Pilots of the Commonwealth, who, from time to time, have safely steered the Public Vessel through all those dangers to which the stormy and tempestuous nature of our Free Constitution perpetually expose it.

Now

Now whenever it shall happen, that this Ministerial *Salt* shall have *lost its savour*, is become insipid or corrupt, no expedients (though EXPEDIENTS be the Statesman's Asylum) will afford us its Virtue. Yet CUNNING and CIRCUMVENTION have been so long employed to hold the place of *Wisdom* and *good Faith*, that it, at length, became a question, which of these two kinds was the native and genuine *Salt* of the Politician; though the History of Mankind had amply explained the difference; and long experience had so fully convinced the Statesman himself, of the small use of *cunning* and *circumvention* in the conduct of public affairs, that he had learned to turn them, with more success, for the advancement of his own; in evading the force of that opposition he was unable to withstand; and in engrossing more power than he knew how to use.

IV. But now, from the partial and subordinate stations in Society, let us come to the *whole Community* itself; and see what is the *Salt*, and what are the essential qualities, of this vast Body, this *Leviathan*, of whom it is said,—*upon Earth there is not his like**, in whose *parts and power and comely proportion* † (to use the language of the sacred Writer) are contained two Societies, the *civil* and the *religious:* to each of which, every individual, in a different capacity, belongs. The essential quality of the *civil*, is the *love of man*, manifested by the service of the Public: the essential quality of

* Job xli. 33. † Ver. 12.

the *religious*, is the *love of God*, manifested in the practice of virtue and piety.

1. For, in the first part, individuals associating to obtain those worldly blessings which civil policy only can bestow, the genuine and most natural concern of each is THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE. Hence that reasonable pursuit, and most *heroic*, (though heroism be a passion seldom joined with reason) the LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY. Transported with *this*, and sacrificing all other passions to *this*, nations and people have, from the lowest and basest original, arrived at wealth and empire. A passion, which no power, no policy, no advantage of climate, no superiority in personal endowments, have ever been able to withstand. Inflamed and purified by this passion alone, the Banditti of Rome came, in time, to give Law to the discipline and science of Greece; to the policy and commerce of Egypt; and to the opulence and immense power of Asia.

Whenever this passion hath shone strong amongst us, we have seen England become the Pacificator of the Continent, and rival Monarchs sue for our alliance.—And what is it that is said to have clouded this scene of glory? What, but the decline, the extinction, of the PATRIOT-PASSION; under the counterfeit professions of the *Factious*; the secret discouragements of the *Corrupt*; and the open ridicule of the *Profligate*.

Now, what shall we substitute to supply the loss of this essential virtue, the *Salt* of this animating principle? Something, no doubt, will be attempted,

to

to prevent Government from falling into dishonour and contempt. There is a mimic passion, which will be vainly busied to repair this loss, by the MULTIPLICATION OF OUR LAWS: For the decay of that genuine *salt*, the *love of our Country*, being amongst its other mischiefs, attended with a constant disposition to brave or to evade the *old established Laws*, there seems to have been as constant a provocation in our Governors to counterwork this evil by the addition of *new ones*. But this will ill support the *Patriot-passion*, or supply the want of it; when men observe, or fancy they observe, that a *multiplicity of Laws*, instead of giving strength to the general, becomes a snare and entanglement to particulars.

2. If we turn from the Community in its *civil*, to its *religious* capacity, we shall find its *essence* (when purified, as ours, by the GOSPEL) to consist in the *love of God, and in the practice of piety and virtue*. And this *Salt*, the native temper of Englishmen hath, in all past ages, eminently supplied: so that the *Piety* of BRITAIN was long its characteristic badge. From what fatal concurrence of unlucky accidents we have suffered this celestial flame to go out and die away, even amidst the increase of its fuel (for never was the Christian Faith so well proved to be a *reasonable service* as in these times), it is not my purpose, at present, to inquire. The loss is notorious. It is seen by our actions, it is avowed in our speculations, and boasted of as our glory,

glory, that this *Faith* hath now no longer its wonted hold on the lives and consciences of men.

V. And now this brings me still nearer to my Text. For the GOSPEL is that SPECIFIC SALT, which our blessed Master intimates should, in these latter days, *lose its savour*; and more than intimates, should find no succedaneum to supply its place.

Yet so insensible are we grown even to the need of any, that we hardly seek or inquire for relief; contrary to the foregoing cases, where we find men busied, however vainly, to supply the depraved state of their condition, by new inventions. And were it not for the humanity of certain well-bred Gentlemen, this *crooked Generation* would be in danger of forgetting that there was any such thing as A RULE OF RIGHT, which these new Instructors offer to us, as an equivalent for THE RULE OF FAITH.

But, not trusting to this, other phantoms, it is true, have been raised up to season our *insipidity*.

The MAN OF HONOUR stands forth to assure us, that a *sense of Honour* (from which sacred name he takes his title), and not of *Religion*, is the true polisher and refiner of human manners. And yet we see, modern Honour hath no other connexion with Virtue than what FASHION hath chanced to make between them; and that *Honour* may thrive and do well (as the practice of fashionable men shews) amidst the breach of all God's *Commandments* and the King's.

The

The MAN OF SCIENCE, indeed, hath discovered a still more exquisite relief, in our distresses. He bids us procure, for ourselves, a TASTE; which, in the lucky absence of our Religion, will answer every thing. This, says he, is that true *internal feeling*, which Fanatics have so much mistaken; and only wants to be new touched by this Philosophy, to be indeed THE GOD WITHIN.

Though if we reflect, that TASTE is governed by the *Imagination*, just as HONOUR is regulated on the *Fashion*, we may find reason to complain that our Betters have here (as usual) only provided for themselves; and that TASTE and HONOUR, like the *Quails and Manna* in the wilderness, are too delicate a repast for the gross appetites of the People: and that, however solid a consolation this new *seasoning* of the decayed *salt* of Religion may afford the polite and the well-bred, where *fashion* and *fancy* supply the place of FAITH and HOPE, yet for us *miserable sinners* a more substantial Diet is to be provided.

To sum up all—From what hath been said you may collect, how desperate the condition of things must needs be, whenever the several stations of Society, and much more when Society itself, shall have *lost* their essential qualities, the SALT which constitutes their natures, and makes them to be what they are.

How near we are approaching to this fatal period, or how far removed from it, must be left to every man's serious reflection.

If

If we should be found to have fallen from that happy state in which the Creator first placed us, and to which our Redeemer restored us; the state in which nature put us, and Grace hath long supported us; what have we now to do, but, with all humility, to apply to the Author of our Salvation, that he would recall things to that Order, which, on his creation of them, he pronounced GOOD, and which, when run into confusion, he restored and harmonized, when the whole choir of Heaven sung —*Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will towards men!*

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE NATURE AND END OF THE SACRAMENT OF *THE LORD'S SUPPER.*

☞ THE Subject of the following "*Discourse*" (we are told by Bishop HURD) "had been so embroiled by two eminent "Writers of opposite principles, that it became necessary to "take it out of their hands, and to guard the Publick from "being bewildered and misled, either by a Popish or Socinian "comment. In a moderate compass, he" [WARBURTON] "has "refuted the system of either party, and explained his "own notion of the Sacrament (which was also that of "the great Cudworth) in so clear a manner, that few men "of sense and judgment will now question where the truth "lies."———See *Life of the Author*, prefixed to this Edition, Vol. i. p. 75.

DISCOURSE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE celebration of the LORD'S SUPPER being our constant duty, as it is *to shew the Lord's death till he come* *; and likewise our greatest interest, as it is *the communion of the body and blood of Christ* †; it may not be improper to inquire into its SPECIFIC NATURE, in order to comprehend both the force of our obligation to frequent the Lord's table, and the value of that benefit we receive in worthily communicating.

The history of its institution is delivered by St. Matthew, in these words, "And as they were eating, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, "and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat; "this is MY BODY: and he took the cup, and gave "thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye "all of it; for this is MY BLOOD of the New Tes- "tament, which is shed for many for the remission "of Sins ‡."

The Rites and Ceremonies of the law were TYPICAL. A Type, as hath been shewn elsewhere §,

* 1 Cor. xi. 26. † Ibid. x. 16.

‡ Ch. xxvi. 26, &c. § Div. Leg. Book iv.

arose

arose from the ancient mode of conversing by *signs*. For, by adding a *moral import* to a significative sign, the action becomes a TYPE *. This sacred Rite, which (together with *Baptism*) was to take place of the whole Jewish ritual, is, like that ritual, *Typical* also: but with this difference,—The Jewish Rites were predictive of things *future*; and so, were obscure and intricate: this, significative of a thing *past*; and so, clear and intelligible.

Thus far as to its *form*. Its *specific nature* will be our next inquiry. To have an exact idea of this, two things must be well considered: The state of Religion at the time this Rite was instituted, and the particular season in which it was celebrated.

1. In those ages of the world when victims made so great a part of the Religion both of Jews and Gentiles, the *sacrifice* was always followed by a religious feasting on the thing offered; which was called, the *feast upon or after the sacrifice*; the partakers of which feast were supposed to become partakers of the *benefits* of the Sacrifice. Now, from the Gospel-history of the institution of the *Lord's Supper*, and from St. Paul's reasoning upon it, a celebrated person hath long since shewn, with great compass of learning, and force of argument, That Jesus, about to offer himself a sacrifice on the cross for our redemption, did, in conformity to a general practice, institute the *last supper*, under the

* Div. Leg. Book iv.

idea,

idea of a feast after the sacrifice *. So far that learned writer.

2. As to the particular season in which this holy Rite was celebrated; We are to consider, that the great SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS was typically prefigured by several of the Temple-oblations; and especially by the PASCHAL-LAMB. Now just before the *passion*, and while Jesus was eating the *Paschal-supper*, which was a Jewish *feast after or upon the sacrifice*, he institutes this holy Rite. And as it was his general custom to allude, in his actions and expressions, to what passed before his eyes, or presented itself to his observation †; who can doubt, when we see, in the very form of celebration,

* Dr. Cudworth, *in his Discourse concerning the true notion of the Lord's Supper.*——But to his own System, like a fair and able writer, who conceals nothing, and leaves nothing unanswered, he produces this Objection, "That the true notion of the Lord's Supper is to be "derived indeed from the Passover, but the Jewish "Passover had no relation to a Sacrifice, being nothing "else but a mere FEAST; and therefore, from analogy "to the Jewish Rites, we cannot make the Lord's "supper to be Epulum Sacrificale, a feast upon Sacri-"fice?" And then answers it at large, in the second and third Chapters of his *Discourse*, with that invincible force of learning and reasoning almost peculiar to him.

† See Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, p. 148. where he takes notice how Jesus, from the *approach of harvest*, from *the lilies in bloom*, from the *fig-trees shooting out*, from the *sheep kept in folds near the Temple, for sacrifices*, &c. took occasion to inculcate his spiritual doctrines and precepts.

bration, all the marks of a *sacrificial supper*, but that the divine Institutor intended it should bear the same relation to his *sacrifice on the Cross*, which the *Paschal-supper*, then celebrating, bore to the oblation of the *Paschal-lamb*; that is, to be of the nature of a *feast after the sacrifice*. For if this was not his purpose, and that no more was intended than a *general memorial, or remembrance of a dead benefactor*, why was this instant of time preferred to all other throughout the course of his ministry, any of which had been equally commodious?

This reasoning receives additional strength even from what hath been supposed to invalidate it, namely, the concluding words of the institution—*Do this in remembrance of me.* For though these words, considered alone, might signify no more than the remembrance of our obligations to him in general; yet when preceded by—*this is my body —this is my blood*, they necessarily imply the remembrance of his death and passion for us, in particular. And could there be a *feast after the sacrifice* in which that sacrifice was not commemorated?

It is true, the injunction of doing it *in remembrance* implies, that the celebration was to be continually repeated; which was not the case of *feasts after the sacrifice*; on which, as we say, this holy Rite was modelled. But this was a necessary difference; for the great Sacrifice itself, of which this *Feast* was a type, differed in the same manner from all other sacrifices. The Jewish and Pagan Oblations

tions had, or were supposed to have, only a passing and temporary virtue: The Sacrifice on the cross is of perpetual efficacy; and will continue to operate till the consummation of all things. It seemed fit, therefore, that the operating virtue of this Sacrifice should be perpetually set before us, in a constant celebration of the *Feast upon it.*

We have now seen what may be naturally, and indeed what must be reasonably, inferred of Christ's purpose in the *last Supper*, from the history of its institution.

Let us try next what we can collect of St. PAUL's sense, in this matter, who hath occasionally spoken at large concerning it. And here we shall find, that this very sort of Feast, which the words of the institution tacitly allude to, St. Paul, in order to shew the *specific nature* of the Rite, expressly draws a comparison from; and at the same time, in order to shew the efficacy of it, informs us of the end and purpose of those *Feasts upon the sacrifice.* It is, in that place of his first epistle to the Corinthians, where he reproves the proselytes to Christianity for the idolatrous practice of eating with the Gentiles, of things offered to idols, in their *feasts upon the sacrifice.* His words are these—"I speak as to "wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of "blessing which we bless, is it not the communion "of the blood of Christ? The bread which we "break, is it not the communion of the body of "Christ? For we being many are one bread, and "one body: for we are all partakers of that one

" bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not " they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the " altar? What say I then? That an idol is any " thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols " is any thing? But I say, that the things which " the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and " not to God: and I would not that ye should have " fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup " of the Lord, and the cup of devils: Ye cannot " be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table " of devils *."

The Apostle professeth, in this place, to write to these Corinthians under their assumed character of *wise men*. And though perhaps he may use the term a little ironically, and in reproof of the *divisions*, before objected to them; yet the logical inference drawn from an appeal to such a character, holds not the less, for the sarcasm in which it is conveyed. My meaning is, That we may fairly conclude, the reasoning to be such as *wise men* would not disdain to consider; and so regularly conducted as *wise men* would best comprehend. In a word, pursued with that science and precision which leaves no room for a loose, popular, and inaccurate interpretation.

In the first place, therefore, we may collect, that *The Cup of blessing* is not simply a general commemoration of a deceased benefactor, but a commemoration of Christ's death and passion: It is the *communion of the blood of Christ*; an expression, as will be seen hereafter, of the utmost elegance,

* 1 Cor. x. 15—21.

to

to imply *a feast upon the sacrifice*. But the inference the Apostle draws from it, puts his meaning beyond all doubt—*For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.* He says, *the partaking of one bread*, makes the receivers, of *many*, to become *one* body. A just inference, if this Rite be of the nature of a *feast upon the sacrifice*; for then, the *communion of the body and blood of Christ* unites the receivers into one body, by an equal distribution of one common benefit: But if it be only a general commemoration of a deceased benefactor, it leaves the receivers as it found them: not *one body*; but *many separate professors* of one common Faith.

The Apostle having thus shewn the last Supper to be of the nature of *a feast upon the sacrifice*; for the truth of which he appeals to their own conceptions of it—*The cup of blessing—is it not the communion?* &c. *The bread which we break, is it not the communion?* &c. He then endeavours to convince them of the impiety of their behaviour, from the nature of these feasts, as they were understood both by Jews and Gentiles; who equally held, that they WHO EAT OF THE SACRIFICES WERE PARTAKERS OF THE ALTAR. But what had either of these *eaters of the sacrifices* to do with the *partakers of the bread and wine* in the last Supper, if the last Supper was not a feast of the same kind with their feasts? But especially, if the three feasts, *Jewish*, *Pagan*, and *Christian*, had not one common nature, how could the Apostle have inferred that this intercommunity was absolutely inconsistent? *Ye cannot*

drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, &c. For though there might be IMPIETY in the promiscuous use of Pagan and Christian Rites; yet the INCONSISTENCY arises from their having a common nature; and so, consequently (as they had opposite originals) from their destroying one another's effects, in the very celebration. The reasoning stands thus. Those who eat *of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar*. A sacrifice at the altar was a FEDERAL rite: consequently, the *feast upon that sacrifice* became a federal Rite likewise. *The Lord's table*, and *the table of devils*, therefore, being both federal Rites, the same man could not be partaker of both. This is the Apostle's argument to the *wise men* here appealed to: and we see it turns altogether on this postulatum, that the last Supper is of the nature of a *feast upon the sacrifice:* Suppose it now a *general commemoration only of a dead benefactor*, and all this reasoning vanishes; for though a man cannot *execute two federal Rites* which destroy one another; yet a *federal rite* and a *bare remembrance*, in two contrary religions, have none of this opposition; but may be *celebrated*, if not without *impiety*, yet without any of that *inconsistency* which the learned Apostle here charges upon his licentious Corinthians.

But this was not the only abuse they committed in the celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; nor this the only place in the Epistle declarative of the nature of that holy Rite. These Corinthians, as appears by the next chapter, had been guilty of celebrating the Lord's Supper in a very indecent

manner, by confounding it with their ordinary repasts, or with convivial doings of their own invention, where charity and sobriety were too commonly violated. Now this indiscriminate celebration, the Apostle calls, the being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord**. A charge surely much aggravated, were the Lord's Supper instituted only to commemorate a dead benefactor. The Corinthians did not make a due distinction between their more ordinary food and the eating and drinking in memory of a deceased friend. This doubtless was a high ingratitude. Yet to rank these criminals with the murderers of the *Lord of life* is a severity in which we can hardly see the justice. But let us only suppose, that St. Paul considered the last Supper as a *feast upon a sacrifice*, that is, as a Rite in which the benefits of Christ's death and passion were conveyed, and at the same time slighted, and all becomes easy and natural. The profanation of such a Rite, by rendering his death ineffectual, was indeed aiding the purpose of his murderers; and therefore might be fitly compared, and justly equalled, to the prodigious enormity of that crime.

Such then, I presume, is the true nature of the LORD'S SUPPER. And was the adjusting a precise idea of it, as it referred to a religious custom of antiquity, a matter only of curiosity and speculation, I might perhaps have left it to the ecclesiastical historian. But it appears to me to have important consequences with regard both to our FAITH and WORSHIP. For,

* 1 Cor. xi. 27.

1. If the last Supper be of the nature of *a feast after a sacrifice*, then is it a declaration of Jesus himself, that his death upon the cross was a REAL SACRIFICE. For figurative expression (as some are apt to deem the Gospel representation of Christ's *sacrifice* and *atonement*) could never produce a religious Rite of divine appointment, arising from, and dependent on, a real specific action. I say, of *divine appointment*, because many of human original have been thus produced. Yet then only (which is a farther support to the preceding observation) when the *figure* had been mistaken for a *substance*.

2. If the last Supper be of the nature of *a feast after a sacrifice*, then is it productive of great and special benefits to the partakers. For the partakers of the Jewish and Gentile *feasts after a sacrifice* did, or were supposed to communicate of the benefits of the sacrifice.

However, a very learned writer, whose principles of reasoning, and method in deducing and conducting them, may serve for a model to the fair Inquirer, hath lately endeavoured to prove, in *A plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, "that it was instituted merely in remem-"brance of Christ; that the bread to be taken and "eaten was appointed to be the memorial of his "body broken; and the wine to be drunk was "ordained to be the memorial of his blood shed *." His intention in this appears commendable. It was to free the *last Supper* from Superstition; whose untimely fruit is at best but a lifeless *rubrical piety*.

* P. 24. 3d Edit.

Yet

Yet in pursuit of this commendable design, he hath gone, I presume, too far: He hath taken away its SPECIFIC nature, and left it nothing but its GENERIC. He hath excluded the idea of *a feast after the sacrifice*, in which the celestial benefits of the Giver are conveyed, and confined us to the notion of a mere *memorial*, in which the gratitude only of the Receiver is returned.

He proceeds upon this great PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE; "That the Bible alone ought to determine our belief in all matters of faith and religious opinion." And this, which can never be too much insisted on, he urgeth with a freedom becoming a lover of truth, and a candour expressive of his disinclination to controversy. This may fairly be said of his general conduct.

But whether he hath been as happy in the APPLICATION of his *principle*, may be reasonably made a doubt.

His METHOD of reasoning is not less judicious than the *choice* of his topics. He hath deduced a number of propositions tied and fastened to one another, till, with these *cords of a man*, he hath drawn the reader to his conclusion. Here, if he obtrudes upon us any false hook in the chain, the art or mistake is easily detected: If all be strong and sound, the force of it will be perceived to more advantage.

Let us examine his reasoning, therefore, with the same precison and brevity with which he urgeth it: And, as we deny his CONCLUSION, shew the FAULTY LINK which hath imposed upon his Readers;

ers; and, it may be, upon himself. The Argument is comprised in the *eight following*

PROPOSITIONS.

" I. The partaking of the Lord's Supper is not a " duty of itself; or a duty apparent to us from the " nature of things; but a duty made such to Chris- " tians, by the positive institution of Jesus Christ.

" II. All positive duties, or duties made such by " institution alone, depend entirely upon the will " and declaration of the person who institutes and " ordains them, with respect to the real design and " end of them; and consequently to the due manner " of performing them.

" III. It is plain, therefore, that the nature, the " design, and the due manner of partaking of the " Lord's Supper, must of necessity depend upon " what Jesus Christ, who instituted it, hath de- " clared about it.

" IV. It cannot be doubted that he himself suf- " ficiently declared to his first and immediate Fol- " lowers, the whole of what he designed should be " understood by it, or implied in it.

" V. It is of small importance therefore to Chris- " tians to know what the many Writers upon this " subject, since the time of the Evangelists and " Apostles, have affirmed. Much less can it be the " duty of Christians to be guided by what any per- " sons, by their own Authority, or from their own " imaginations, may teach concerning this duty.

" VI. The passages in the New Testament which " relate to this duty, and they alone, are the origi- " nal accounts of the nature and end of this

" insti-

" institution; and the only authentic declarations,
" upon which we of later ages can safely depend;
" being written by the immediate followers of our
" Lord; those who were witnesses themselves to
" the Institution; or were instructed in it, either
" by those who were so, or by Christ himself;
" and consent in delivering down one and the same
" account of this religious duty.

" VII. The Writers of the New Testament give
" an account of the Institution of the Lord's Sup-
" per in the following passages, which therefore
" are principally to be regarded, viz. St. Matthew,
" chap. xxvi. ver. 26, &c. St. Mark, chap. xiv.
" ver. 22. &c. St. Luke, chap. xxii. ver. 19, &c.
" and St. Paul, 1 Cor. chap. xi. ver. 23, &c.

" VIII. It appears from these passages, that the
" End for which our Lord instituted this duty was
" the *remembrance* of himself; that the bread to
" be taken and eaten was appointed to be the *me-*
" *morial* of his body broken, and the wine to be
" drunk was ordained to be the *memorial* of his
" blood shed: or (according to the express words
" of St. Paul) that the one was to be eaten and
" the other drunk in *remembrance* of Christ, and
" this to be continued until he, who was once pre-
" sent with his disciples, and is now absent, shall
" come again *."

As this, which the learned writer uses, is the method of the Demonstrators, one would wonder by what force of invention he was enabled to de-

* Plain Account, p. 2—24.

duce

duce this conclusion. But we often see, that where force is wanting, a little matter of address will supply its place.

The 4th *Proposition*, which runs thus, performed the feat. "It cannot be doubted (says he) but that "he himself [Jesus] SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED to "his first and immediate followers the whole of "what he designed should be understood by it [the "*sacrament of the Lord's Supper*] or implied in it."

Now I apprehend *this* to be the *faulty* LINK; and that all the connexion it hath with the *propositions*, which precede and follow it, lies in the unperceived ambiguity of the terms SUFFICIENTLY DECLARED: Which may either signify, *declared by express words*; or, on the other hand, *declared by significative circumstances*, such as respect the time, the occasion, the mode of acting, or the manner of speaking. For the communication of our thoughts is carried on as well by EXPRESSIVE ACTIONS as by WORDS AND SOUNDS: nor did the first bear a small part in the converse of the Ancients*; especially amongst the Jewish people of all ages, to the time in question.

Hence it comes to pass, that though we are agreed in the Proposition, that *Jesus sufficiently declared the whole of what he understood by his last Supper*, we draw so different conclusions: The learned writer, that it was simply a *remembrance of Christ*; I, that it was of the nature of *a feast upon the Sacrifice*. For he considers only what Jesus in express words SAID, at the institution of

* See Divine Legation, Vol. IV. Book iv. Sect. 4.

this

this holy rite: I take in both what he SAID and DID; and not only that, but the MODE of saying and doing; relative to the time, the occasion, the manners, and the customs of the Age; as being persuaded, that the speaker's meaning can be but very imperfectly understood without taking in all these things. A rule of interpretation, in which, I suppose the learned writer would concur with me, were the point concerning a difficulty in CLASSICAL expression.

This, then, I understand to be the only remaining question, Whether or no the Disciples of Jesus (as it is agreed, their Master did not, in express words, call this rite, *a feast upon sacrifice*) could collect, from the whole of the circumstances attending the institution, that it was indeed of the nature of such a feast? namely, from the critical time of the celebration, which was just before his passion, and at the Jewish paschal supper; from the peculiarity of phrase employed in the institution, of which more hereafter; and from his accustomed manner in the execution of his ministry, to adapt his words and actions to the scene or subject before him? Now, I suppose that, from these circumstances, one may fairly conclude, the Disciples might and did collect that the *last Supper* was of the nature of a *feast upon sacrifice*.

For, 1. it was much in the genius of those times to convey information, as well by actions and indirect circumstances, as by speech and explicit words. So that the hearer would be naturally as attentive to the one mode of instruction, as to the other.

2. Nothing

2. Nothing can be conceived clearer or more expressive of such *a feast*, than the circumstances attending the institution of this; as may appear from hence, That we, who live in an age when such modes of converse are, and have been long disused, yet see, in these circumstances of time, occasion, and mode of expression, such an aptitude to convey the idea of a feast *after the sacrifice*, as, I am persuaded, sufficiently informs every capable person of the nature of this feast.

3. Though the Disciples are indeed represented by the Evangelists as exceeding slow and dull to apprehend *the things of God*, yet this concerned only the *spiritual meaning* of such *things*; from which their inveterate prejudices for a *carnal economy* had shut up all their faculties; so as to deny any introduction to a new Religion, opposite to the *temporary* purposes of their old one. It doth not appear, they had any natural defect of apprehension to understand a plain allusion to the rites and customs of their Law; which the institution in question directly objected to them.

But what is here urged will receive further light as well as strength from the remarkable reasoning of St. Paul upon this holy Mystery. We have seen above, that the language he employs to explain his ideas, and the similitude he brings to enforce his reasoning, are adapted only to the consideration of the last Supper's being *a feast upon a sacrifice*. Now one or other of these things will needs follow, Either that he had an express revelation, as well of its

its nature as of the History of its institution, from Christ himself, at the time of his conversion; or that he logically inferred this its nature from the several circumstances of the history of the institution.

If we hold the first, The dispute is at an end: If the second, What hindered the rest of the disciples from doing the same?

I should be inclined to the latter opinion; and that all which was revealed to him by Jesus, was the history of the institution as we find it recorded in the Gospel. His own words, where he tells us how he came by his knowledge, seem to decide in favour of this opinion. "For I have received "(says he) of the Lord that which also I deliver "unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night "in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when "he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, "eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: "this do in remembrance of me. After the same "manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament "in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in "remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this "bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's "death till he come *." This is the whole of his account concerning the history of the institution. He then proceeds, in the next verse, to reason from it—"Wherefore whoever shall eat this bread, and "drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be "guilty of the body and blood of Christ."

* 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

So

So far then as to the SUFFICIENT DECLARATION of the mind of Jesus to his *immediate followers*, concerning the nature of this holy Rite. The Reader, perhaps, may think this reasoning not a little strengthened by what the excellent Cudworth says of this matter. " But lest we should seem (says " he) to set up fancies of our own, we come now " to DEMONSTRATE that the Lord's Supper is " a *feast upon sacrifice*; in the same manner with " the *Jewish* and *Heathen*. And that from a " place of Scripture where all these three are com- " pared together and made exact parallels to one " another. 1 Cor. x. 14—21. Where the Apostle's " scope being to convince the Corinthians of the " unlawfulness of eating things sacrificed to Idols, " he shews, that though an idol was *physically* " nothing, yet *morally*, to eat of things sacrificed " to Idols in the Idol's temple was to consent with " the sacrifices, and to be guilty of them. This he " illustrates *first* by a parallel Rite in the Christian " religion, where eating and drinking of the body " and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a " real COMMUNICATION in his death and sacri- " fice. *Secondly*, from another parallel of the " same rite amongst the Jews, where always they " that ate of the sacrifices were accounted partakers " of the Altar. Therefore, as to eat the body and " blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, is to be " made partaker of *his* sacrifice; as to eat of the " Jewish sacrifices was to partake in the *legal* " sacrifices themselves; so to eat things offered up " in sacrifice to idols was to be made partakers of

" the

" the idol sacrifices, and therefore was unlawful. " The things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they " sacrificed to *Devils*; but Christ's body and blood " was offered up in sacrifice to God, and therefore " they could not partake both of the sacrifice of " the true God, and the sacrifice of Devils. St. " Paul's argument here must needs suppose a PER- " FECT ANALOGY between these three, and that " they are ALL PARALLELS to one another, or else " it hath no strength. Wherefore I conclude from " hence, that the *Lord's Supper* is the same amongst " Christians, in respect of the Christian sacrifice, " that, amongst the Jews, the feasts upon the legal " sacrifices were; and, amongst the Gentiles, the " feasts upon the idol-sacrifices; and therefore " *epulum sacrificale*, or *epulum ex oblatis* *."

But this apostolic reasoning, so well inforced by the modern Doctor, our learned Writer found himself obliged to explain away, before he could establish his own Hypothesis.

First then, he gives us a long paraphrase on the reasoning of St. Paul †; which, you may be sure, he makes very conformable to his own System. But to this, it is enough to oppose the short one of Dr. Cudworth just now delivered. And what is wanting in the weight of its authority, some may think to be sufficiently supplied by the advantage of a certain favourable prejudice, " That the sense which is easiest, and needs the fewest words to explain, is the most likely to be the true." However,

* A Discourse concerning the true Nature of the Lord's Supper, Chap. IV. † From p. 32 to 39.

where the learned writer supports his own paraphrase by *criticism* or *reasoning*, he will deserve all our respect and attention.

First then, on the words—*The cup—which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*—he observes, that, "though "this be interpreted by many learned men to signify "a *communion*, or partaking of *all* the *benefits* of "*Christ's body* broken, and *blood* shed, yet, he "thinks, the words cannot have that signification— "That, the Greek word Κοινωνία, used by the Apos- "tle, and the word *communion*, which is Latin, "both signify a JOINT PARTAKING, or a partaking "of something in common with others of the same "society. And this *joint partaking* of Christ's "body and blood can signify no more than eating "his body and drinking his blood as a society of "his disciples *."

To this, it may be sufficient to observe, that if, by the word Κοινωνία, the Apostle had meant, as the learned writer supposeth he did mean, *a joint partaking, or a partaking in common with our fellow Christians of the bread and wine*, he would have *expressed* his meaning. In the text, there is not a tittle of *fellow Christians* or *others* of the same society. It is Κοινωνία τῦ αἵματος—Κοινωνία τῦ σώματος, *the communion of the blood—the communion of the body*. Had he meant what the learned writer makes him to mean, he would doubtless have said Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ σῶμα—*Your communion in the body*, i. e. your eating of it jointly. St. Paul knew how to

* P. 39, 40.

express

express himself properly. And if this had been his meaning, he would have expressed himself in some such manner; as appears from a passage in his epistle to the Philippians, where he is professedly speaking of this joint participation of a blessing. Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον *—*Your communion in the Gospel*, i. e. your joint belief and profession of it.

But the fallacy of the reasoning seems to lie in the sense the learned writer gives to the Greek and Latin words, as if they could signify nothing but a *joint partaking* with some other man, or body of men: and then indeed they could signify nothing else, in this place, but what they signified in all others. But He seems not to have considered, that though indeed this be their direct and original sense, yet, as is common to moral modes, they had taken another, by their being applied to *spiritual* beings, as well as to man; nay even to inanimate things, as may be seen in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, Κοινωνία παθημάτων αὐτῦ †, *the fellowship or communion of his sufferings*. Now, when thus applied, the idea of our joint fellowship with men is not contained, except where that fellowship is expressed: as will appear from the following words of the same Apostle. Κοινωνία τῦ υἱῦ—*the communion of the Son* ‡; Κοινωνία τῦ ἁγίυ πνεύματος—*the communion of the Holy Ghost* §. In these instances, there is no pretence for admitting the idea of *a joint-partaking with our fellow-Christians:* with whom, however, we believe in common in the *Son*, and in

* Phil. i. 5. † Phil. iii. 10.
‡ 1 Cor. i. 9. § 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

the *Holy Ghost*; because here is no joint act, defined by time and place, as in the institution of the last Supper; which, I suppose, is the reason of the learned Author's giving this sense to *communion of the body and blood.*

But to make it still more apparent, that where the sacred writers use the word Κοινωνία in this construction, to signify our *union with our salvation*, no such *joint partaking* is to be understood, it will not be improper to consider the following passage, where St. John expressly distinguisheth the communion with Christ, from the communion or fellowship with one another: Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μεθ' ἡμῶν—κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μεθ' ἀλλήλων*. *But if we say we have fellowship with him—we have fellowship with one another*; and by this mode of inference, and only by this, *the communion of the blood*, and *the communion of the body*, may likewise signify what the learned Writer would have it, a *joint-partaking*, or *communion with one another.*

The learned Writer then goes on, to *reason* on the passage in question: and, when he hath done that, returns afresh to criticise the word Κοινωνία. It may not be improper, therefore, before we proceed to his *reasoning* on the passage, to consider what he further urgeth in behalf of his sense of Κοινωνία; and so, lay all his criticisms together. He tells us then, that "there is little ground for the "remark of some learned men, that the word "Κοινωνία *(communion)* is used where the inward "or *spiritual* part of the Lord's Supper is spoken "of; and the word μετέχειν, *(partaking)* afterwards

* 1 Gen. Ep. i. 6, 7.

"used,

" used, where the *external* only is meant; when we " see the word Κοινωνοὶ *(communicants)* here used " with regard to idols; where no *spiritual* part " could be thought of. For the whole argument " supposes an *Idol* to be *nothing*; and the Chris- " tians concerned, to have no thought of receiving " good or harm from those idols.—Now the same " words being used with regard to Christ and those " Dæmons [Κοινωνία and Κοινωνοὶ in one verse; and " μέτεχειν in another] it follows that *Communion* and " *partaking* are words of the same signification in " both cases *."

There is no ground, he says, for the distinction; since, in the place in question Κοινωνία is used when no *spiritual part could be thought of.* What, *no spiritual part*, when the question was of communicating with *Idols?* No, for St. Paul says, *an Idol is nothing.* This is true. But he says, at the same time, that these *Idols* were *Devils*; for that the *Gentiles sacrificed to Devils, and that those who eat of such sacrifices* had *communion with Devils.* Now, the DEVIL, in St. Paul's opinion, was *something.* He says, indeed, *an Idol is nothing.* But does he mean a metaphysical non-entity? Surely, not: for he immediately adds, that the *thing offered to them* was likewise *nothing.* He must use the negation therefore in a *moral* sense, "That no *benefits* could accrue " to the idolatrous worshippers." But this is consistent enough with the moral entity of the Devil: and while that remained, a *spiritual part might well be thought of,* when the Apostle spoke of *communicating with him.* The consequence is, that the

* P. 45, 46.

criticism of those *learned men*, who distinguished between Κοινωνία and μέτεχειν stands good, for any thing this learned writer hath said to the contrary. Consider the words—*What say I then? That the Idol is any thing, or that which is offered to Idols any thing? But* I say *that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship* (or communion) *with Devils.* There seems to be no great difficulty in the Apostle's meaning; which amounts plainly to this—"a Gentile idol, as a protector and benefactor, is indeed *nothing*, their Idols being the celestial bodies, deceased Ancestors, Legislators, or Kings: but the Author of Gentile Idolatry was the *Devil*; therefore, says he, though ye can possibly receive no benefit from Idols, ye may yet receive real damage from the Devil, the declared enemy of mankind." So that admitting with the learned writer, against all evidence of Antiquity, That the *Christians concerned had not any thought of receiving good or harm from those Idols*, yet (which is more to the purpose) we see St. Paul had.

For whatever notions the Gentiles, or the gentilized Jews of this time, had of *Dæmons*, every man who reads the New Testament with attention will be forced to confess, that the sacred writers never use the word (and they use it often) but they always mean Satan and his Angels, the Powers of darkness, Reprobates from God and goodness. *The good and evil Dæmons of Gentilism* were indeed those *Idols*, not of the *Altar*, but *of the brain*, which the sacred writers esteemed moral NOTHINGS: And yet, of that

that capital enemy of mankind, the Pagans seem to have received some obscure tradition; but not unmixed with their own invented superstitions: Which preserving some traces of resemblance to the truth, and giving some conformity in the languages of Truth and Error, hath made some men draw strange conclusions, as if the Founders of our holy Religion had taken the advantage of Pagan Superstition to form a System of DEMONOLOGY agreeable to the preconceived fancies of their Converts.

We now come to the learned writer's REASONING on the passage. "If we observe the Apostle's "design in this argument, it will appear that he had "not the least occasion to speak here of the BENE-"FITS of Christ's death. His design was to incite "the Corinthians to *flee from Idolatry*, by shewing "them what a crime it must be in a Christian to do "what was accounted honour to the Gods of the "Heathens, by feasting upon and *partaking* of their "sacrifices. In order to do this it was not his "purpose to say, *By eating bread and drinking wine* "*in the Lord's Supper, you partake of all the* BENE-"FITS *of Christ's death*; and therefore you cannot "eat of the Heathen sacrifices. Neither do I see "that this is any argument at all to the point in "view. But to say, *by eating bread and drinking* "*wine, &c. you eat, drink, and partake of them,* "*not as at a common meal, but of bread and wine,* "*called the body and blood of Christ, in remem-*"*brance of and in honour to him, and acknowledg-*"*ment of his being your master, therefore you*

" *cannot, without great absurdity and guilt, pay*
" *the same sort of honour to false gods by feast-*
" *ing with their votaries, upon their sacrifices.*
" This, I say, is an argument to his purpose, and
" proves all he aimed at *."

I. First then, Admitting the learned Author's representation of St. Paul's *design* to be fairly given, " that it was only to incite the Corinthians to flee " from Idolatry;" yet I do not see, according to the Author's own way of reasoning, why it was not as much to the purpose of the Apostle to urge the last Supper's being a *communion of the body and blood in a feast upon the Sacrifice*, as to urge that the last Supper was not a *common meal, but celebrated in remembrance of and in honour to Christ.* Now, this last, he owns, is *an argument to the purpose.* Why then will he exclude the other? He immediately subjoins the reason—*this* ALONE *proves all that he* [the Apostle] *aimed at.* But here, as I suspect, lurks a fallacy. Because *this alone* proves the great absurdity and guilt of these idolatrous Corinthians; Therefore, they were not to be pushed further. According to this reasoning, Whenever a Minister of justice prosecutes a transgressor of the Laws, it would be to the purpose to prove him guilty of *theft*; but to prove that theft a *sacrilege*, utterly impertinent. In a word, the learned writer argues as if he thought it much to the purpose to urge the *genus* of the action, which proves them, as the learned writer says, *guilty of a great*

* P. 40, 41.

crime

crime and absurdity, but nothing at all to the purpose to insist on the *species* of it, which proves them, as St. Paul says, *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, i. e. his murderers.

But it will be objected, That this illustration of the learned person's argument hath a glare of absurdity which we do not see in the argument itself. It is true, it hath so: For in the argument itself, the glare is taken off by the artful or accidental substitution of one term for another, *benefits* for *communion*; the *effects of the thing* for the *thing itself*. The learned person observes, that it was not to St. Paul's *purpose* (*when his design was to excite the Corinthians to flee from idolatry*) *to talk of the* BENEFITS *of Christ's death*. I do not know any one who thought it was: Not even St. Paul himself, if we may judge by his silence. For he hath not a syllable about BENEFITS. *Of the communion of the body and blood of Christ* he indeed speaks largely: And this seemeth to the purpose: For if the celebration of the Lord's Supper brought them to so near a conjunction with Him, it must be an aggravation both of their guilt and their absurdity to assist at the celebration of a similar feast, in a religion at enmity with His. The *benefits*, arising from this near conjunction, is another consideration; which doth not *directly*, but *obliquely only*, affect the point in question.

II. But secondly, To excite the Corinthians to flee from Idolatry was not (as seems to be insinuated) the *whole* of the Apostle's intention in this place.

place. That matter is particularly inforced in the *eighth* Chapter: and though it be here taken up again in the *tenth*, it is only as it maketh part of a different subject, namely, the VARIOUS PROFANATIONS OF THE LORD'S TABLE, of which the Corinthians had been guilty. And this is handled from the first verse of the tenth Chapter to the thirty-fourth verse of the eleventh; interrupted by a digression, concerning *order in their assemblies* *: For they had neglected the rules he left with them concerning that point of Discipline. And his words, *Be ye followers of me, &c.* † suggesting a reproof, it occasioned the intermediate digression: from whence, he returns to his main subject, *the profanations of the Lord's table:* which he had introduced by an observation of the same misbehaviour in their Forefathers: Who, like them, when under the conduct of Moses, had, in various ways, abused those miraculous blessings of manna from Heaven, and water from the Rock; which St. Paul elegantly accommodates to this occasion—*For they did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ* ‡. Now the profanations in question consisted in these two points, The frequenting the Pagan feasts §; And the making no distinction between the Lord's Supper and their ordinary repast ‖. But the crime of profanation rising in proportion to

* From ver. 2 to 16 of ch. xi. † Chap. xi. ver. 1.
‡ Ch. x. 3, 4. § Ch. x. ‖ Ch. xi. from ver. 17,

the

the dignity of the thing profaned, it was much to the Apostle's purpose, if not to speak of the *benefits* of Christ's death, yet to shew the last Supper to be the *communion of the body and blood of Christ.*

The learned Writer's other argument against the received interpretation, is as follows—"*Ye cannot* "*drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of Devils,* "*Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and* "*the table of Devils,* is the conclusion of the Apos- "tle's reasoning. And this cannot possibly signify "'Ye cannot be partakers of the BENEFITS of "the Lord's table and of the BENEFITS of the "table of the heathen deities:' for no benefit could "possibly be supposed by him to accrue from "these, even to the heathen worshippers them- "selves.—Consequently, when, at the beginning "of the argument, and to introduce only his con- "clusion, he asks, *The cup—is it not the com-* "*munion,* &c. he must be supposed to mean what "alone was to his purpose, 'Is not our *joint par-* "*taking* of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper "a *religious* partaking of what are *memorials* of "Christ's body and blood?'—the premisses there- "fore cannot be supposed to contain in them what "has no relation to the conclusion drawn from "them. In the *conclusion, of partaking of the* "*table of Devils,* it must be allowed that nothing "is said about *benefits:* in the *premisses* therefore, "*of the communion of the body and blood,* which "lead to this, it was not the Apostle's design to "speak of *benefits*; but only of the *significancy* of "that

" that rite, as an *act of religious honour* paid by " Christians to their Master *."

Now, not to repeat what hath been already observed of the Fallacy, which runs through the learned person's whole argument, by substituting BENEFITS for COMMUNION; which, however, is of much importance; for, though the partakers of the Pagan feasts could receive no *benefits* from Devils, yet they might be in *communion* with them: Not, I say, to repeat what hath been already urged, It will be sufficient to observe against the learned person's reasoning, that it is founded on a supposition, that St. Paul could not argue *ad hominem*, as the logicians speak: For if He could *so* argue, the observation hath no force. It is agreed, that *St. Paul believed no benefits could accrue to the heathen worshippers from their Idols.* But, if those worshippers themselves believed they *could*, what should hinder a good reasoner, like St. Paul, from telling these paganized Christians, that the benefits from Idol-feasts, and the benefits from the Lord's table, were incongruous and inconsistent; what, I say, but the supposed illogical Liberty of arguing *ad hominem?* That these *early Christians*, who went knowingly to the idol-feasts, were as likely to expect benefit from them, as the *early Jews*, who joined idolatrous worship to that of the God of Israel, is what, I think, no man can deny. Against such Christians, St. Paul might reason hypothetically; and, for argument's sake, grant the benefits of the Idol-feasts to be real, like those of the Lord's

* P. 43, 44.

table.

table. And this, I suppose, is the common practice of all mankind in their reasoning on the like occasion.

The learned Writer then proceeds to the confutation of those who hold the last Supper to be an *eucharistical Sacrifice, commemorative* of that upon the Cross. But though with this, neither I, nor, as I apprehend, the Church of England, are at all concerned, yet as the vindication of the *Lord's Supper* in this point is against a common Adversary, I am proud to join with the learned writer to confute this strange idea of an *Eucharistical commemorative Sacrifice*, which the pious and truly respectable Mr. Robert Nelson hath endeavoured to free from the apparent absurdity *of one sacrifice's being commemorative of another*, by this Argument: "That its being commemorative no more hindered "it from being a proper sacrifice, than the typical "and figurative sacrifices of the old law hindered "them from being proper sacrifices. For as to be "a type (saith this learned man) doth not destroy "the nature and notion of a legal sacrifice, so, to "be REPRESENTATIVE and commemorative doth "not destroy the nature of an evangelical sa-"crifice*." This is well put; but will by no means bear the test. In order to detect the fallacy of this ingenious reasoning, I must beg leave to have recourse to the principles laid down in *The Divine Legation*†.

* Life of Bishop Bull, p. 483. † Book IV. Sect. 4.

It

It is allowed, then, that the *paschal Lamb*, and the *Lord's Supper*, are both *Signs with a moral import*; and, consequently, are both TYPES. How comes it then to pass (might Mr. Nelson ask) that the *paschal Lamb* will admit the nature of a *sacrifice*, and yet the Lord's Supper will not? For this plain reason. The relation which the *paschal Lamb* bore to the *Archetype* on the Cross was, at the time of the institution, for the wise ends of Providence, kept a secret from the followers of the Law. Its *moral import* therefore (and as a TYPE it must have a *moral import*) could be only a *Sacrifice*. The case is widely different in the institution of the *Lord's Supper*. It is declared, by the Institutor himself, to be a *commemoration* of his death and sufferings. Here, the relation between the *type* and *archetype* is declared to all: consequently, its *moral import* is a *commemorative feast on a sacrifice*; but the idea of such a feast necessarily EXCLUDES a *sacrifice*; for the *Thing done*, and the *commemoration of the thing done*, can never be an action of the same kind. However, admitting it could be so; yet this type having its *moral import* in a *commemoration*, can never acquire another, of a *sacrifice*: which, in *metaphysical* conception, would be as monstrous as a *double body*, in *natural*. But, to shew, in one word, a difference, where the learned person thinks there is none—Take away the nature of a *sacrifice* from the Type of the *paschal Lamb*, and you leave it *no moral import*: that is, you deprive it of its nature of a *Type*. But take away

away the idea of a *sacrifice* from the *Lord's Supper*, and it still remains a *Type*; having still a *moral import*, by being a *commemoration* of the death and sufferings of our Lord.

Mr. Nelson himself seemed to have some confused suspicion of the weakness of his inference from the *typical Sacrifices of the old Law*; and therefore, seeing but small connexion between a *Sacrifice* and a *Commemoration* (the latter of which conveys the idea, Scripture gives us of the *Lord's Supper*) he adds the word, REPRESENTATION; which is indeed consistent enough with a Sacrifice: for though, of a *commemorative sacrifice*, we have no instance in practice, and can see no propriety in idea; yet a *representative sacrifice* is very good sense, and may be well supported in the command to *Abraham* to offer up his Son. But then, the History of the Institution of the Lord's Supper is not only absolutely silent, concerning this *representation*, but excludes the idea of it by making it a commemoration. In conclusion, however, let us observe, That a *commemorntive sacrifice*, in the sense Mr. Nelson contends for, is one thing; and *sacrifices at a commemorative feast*, of which Antiquity has many examples, is quite another.

But though this matter fell so fairly in my way, and that I have only followed the example which the learned Writer set me, yet it will be of more use to return to the *Plain Account*, and consider the Author's method of establishing his own Hypothesis. It hath been hitherto esteemed an essential

tial canon of true criticism, that, in order to form a right judgment of the specific nature of any Ordinance or Institution of Antient times, we should have a special regard to the notions, manners, and customs of those times; since it can hardly be supposed, that any solemn or public Rite of religion would be instituted without some reference to the then prevailing Opinions. But the learned Writer of the PLAIN ACCOUNT, as if the very title of his book would have been falsified by such an inquiry, hath attempted to explain *the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper* with as little regard to the genius and manners of Antiquity, as an English Lawyer would take of them, in his reading on a modern act of Parliament.

But the ill effects of such a partial View cannot be better understood than by reflecting, that the very same method of interpretation, which hath led the learned Writer into one extreme, concerning *the* NATURE OF THE THING, hath led the Papists into the direct opposite, concerning the MEANING OF THE WORDS. The celebrated BOSSUET, the most artful, as well as most eloquent, Advocate of the papal Cause, rests all the trength of the LITERAL interpretation of the words, *This is my body—This is my blood*—on this very PRINCIPLE, That the institution of the Lord's supper stands single and alone; detached from all preceding discourse; and unrelated to any contemporary Rite. His words are these—

" Zuinglius said in plain terms, that there was no
" miracle, nor any thing incomprehensible in the
" Eucharist:

" Eucharist: that the bread broken was a repre-
" sentation of the body offered; and the wine
" poured out, of the blood which was shed: that
" Jesus Christ, when he instituted these sacred
" symbols, gave them the Names of the things sig-
" nified: however, that these were not naked
" Signs, nor a simple Representation; for that the
" remembrance and belief of the body offered and
" the blood shed for us nourished and sustained
" our souls; and further, that the Holy Spirit
" sealed the remission of sins, in our hearts. This,
" he said, was the whole of the Mystery. Now it
" must be owned, that NEITHER HUMAN REASON
" NOR COMMON SENSE SUFFERED THE LEAST
" FORCE IN THIS EXPLANATION. The words of
" Scripture only made all the difficulty. And yet,
" when one party urged—*This is my body*; The
" other had their answer ready—*I am the vine*—
" *I am the door*—*that rock was Christ*——It is
" true, that these instances came not up to the
" point. When Jesus Christ said—*This is my*
" *body*—*This is my blood*—he was neither pro-
" pounding a Parable, nor explaining an Allegory.
" The *Words*, which ARE DETACHED AND SEPA-
" RATE FROM ALL OTHER DISCOURSE, carry their
" whole meaning in themselves. The business in
" hand was the institution of a *new Rite*, which
" required the use of SIMPLE TERMS: And that
" place in Scripture is yet to be discovered, where
" the Sign hath the name of the Thing signified
" given to it at the moment of the institution of the
" Rite, and WITHOUT ANY LEADING PREPARA-

" TION *." On the foundation of this reasoning it is that the celebrated Prelate observes, in another place, " That Luther continued invincibly struck " with the force and simplicity of the words—*This* " *is my body—This is my blood.*—The Church had " believed, without difficulty, that Jesus Christ, in " order to consummate his sacrifice, and fulfil the " ancient Figures, hath given us to eat the real " Substance

* Zuingle disoit positivement, qu'il n'y avoit point de miracle dans l'Eucharistie, ni rien d'incomprehensible ; que le pain rompu nous représentoit le corps immolé, et le vin, la sang répandu ; que Jesus Christ en instituant ces signes sacrés leur avoit donné le nom de la chose ; que ce n'étoit pourtant pas un simple spectacle, ni des signes tout-à-fait nûs ; que la mémoire et la foi du corps immolé et du sang répandu soutenoit notre ame ; que cependant le Saint-Esprit scelloit dans les cœurs la remission des peehés ; et que c'étoit la tout le mystere. La raison et le sens humain n'avoient rien à suffrir dans cette explication. L'Ecriture faisoit de la peine ; mais quand les uns opposoient, *Ceci est mon corps*, les autres repondoient, *Je suis la vigne, je suis la porte, le pierre étoit Christ*. Il est vrai que ces exemples n'etoient pas semblables. Ce n'étoit ni en proposant une parabole, ni en éxpliquant une allegorie, que Jesus Christ avoit dit, *Ceci est mon corps, ceci est mon sang*. Ces PAROLES DETACHEES DE TOUT AUTRE DISCOURS portoient tout leur sens en elles-mêmes. Il s'agissoit d'une nouvelle institution qui devoit être faite en TERMES SIMPLES, et on n'avoit encore trouvé aucun lieu de l'Ecriture, où un signe d'institution reçût le nom de la chose, au moment qu'on l'instituoit, et SANS AUCUNE PREPARATION PRECEDENTE. Histoire des Variations, Tom. I. p. 73, 74. Ed. Par. 1730, 8vo.

" Substance of his flesh, offered up for us. She " had the same idea of the blood shed for our " iniquities. Accustomed, from her birth, to mys- " teries incomprehensible, and to the ineffable fa- " vours of divine love, those impenetrable wonders " contained in the literal sense did not shock her " Faith: and Luther never could persuade him- " self, that Jesus Christ either purposely obscured " the institution of his Sacrament; or that words " so simple were capable of conveying so VIOLENT " A FIGURE *."

Thus, we find, the learned Writer of the *Plain Account*, and M. Bossuet, both lay the foundation of their different reasonings in one COMMON PRINCIPLE, " That the institution of the Lord's Supper was detached from all other discourse, unrelated to any other Rite, and unconcerned with any foregoing preparation." Now, even though the falsehood

* Luther demeura frappé invinciblement de la force et de la simplicité de ces paroles : *Ceci est mon corps, Ceci est mon sang*;—L'Eglise avoit cru sans peine, que pour consommer son sacrifice et les figures anciennes Jesus-Christ nous avoit donné à manger la propre substance de sa chair immolée pour nous. Elle avoit la même pensée du sang répandu pour nos pechés. Accoutumée dès son origine à des mysteres incomprehensibles et à des marques ineffables de l'amour divin, les merveilles impénetrables que renfermoit le sens literal ne l'avoient point rebutée; et Luther ne pût jamais se persuader, ni que Jesus-Christ eût voulu obscurcir exprès l'institution de son sacrament, ni que des paroles si simples fussent susceptibles des FIGURES SI VIOLENTES. —Id. ib. p. 43.

hood of this principle had not been fully evinced, as, in truth, it has, where I shew the relation it bears to the Paschal Supper, and how easily and naturally that Supper introduced this Christian Institution; Yet the extremes, into which it hath carried these two learned Writers, of a MERE COMMEMORATION on the one hand, and a REAL PRESENCE on the other, would raise a suspicion that this *common principle* was neither founded in reason, nor supported by fact.

I have said enough of the *commemoration:* And now turn to the REAL PRESENCE of the Catholic Bishop.

He rests it, we see, upon the force of the WORDS; which, in his opinion, can admit of no *figurative* sense, without doing extreme violence to human language and expression. Indeed, as far as regards *the hardness* of the figure, I believe, most Protestant Doctors have been ready enough to join with him.

But this difficulty, great as it is, I presume, the preceding account of the *specific* nature of the Lord's Supper will entirely remove. By that account it appears, that the words of the institution are FIGURATIVE; and so far from suffering any violent conversion, that the sense of *bread* and *wine* fall into the figure of *body* and *blood*, naturally and easily; Nay, what is above all, NECESSARILY.

We have shewn the last Supper to be of the nature of the *feasts upon sacrifice:* in which feasts, the very *body* sacrificed was eaten. Now as this Rite

Rite was to be instituted, and first celebrated, by the very person himself who was offered up for our Redemption, the Institution must needs precede the Sacrifice. Of necessity therefore, some *symbolic elements* must be given, to be received by the Participants, instead of the very body and blood. But, as the flesh of the animal sacrificed was the meat eaten in the *feast after the sacrifice*, the symbolic elements of BREAD AND WINE are naturally, properly, and elegantly called, his BODY AND BLOOD.

Again, if it were the purpose of divine Wisdom to give this *specific* nature to the last Supper, we must needs conclude that Jesus would *intimate* such its nature to the first Participants.

But if (as, in fact, was the case) the same Wisdom thought proper (in conformity to ancient religious Custom) to intimate this only by the *occasion*, and through the *words* of the institution, then the figurative expressions of BODY AND BLOOD became NECESSARY: These only, being fully declarative of the nature of the Rite. And as *a feast upon sacrifice* made the use of the terms *body and blood* to be necessary, so, on the other side, the terms *body and blood* shew this rite to have been *a feast upon sacrifice*.

On the whole, We have, indeed, no conception how divine Wisdom could contrive a more natural, proper, and elegant way of acquainting his disciples, that the Rite, now instituted, was of the nature of *a feast upon sacrifice*, than by terming the elements of BREAD AND WINE communicated, his BODY AND BLOOD.

Thus doth the establishment of the specific nature of this Rite serve to remove a difficulty which hath long embarrassed all the several Opposers of the doctrine of TRANSUBSTANTIATION; by shewing that the FIGURATIVE WORDS of the institution are easy, natural, elegant, and necessary.

It likewise very well accounts for another difficulty, which the Advocates for a *real presence* throw in the way of common sense. They say, "If the words of the institution were only metaphorical, and especially, if the FIGURE was expressive of no more than a *death commemorated*, they might, and probably would, have been changed in the narratives, five times repeated, by the four Evangelists and St. Paul, in distinct Histories, and on different occasions: for that, no reason can be given of the unvaried use of the same words but because they are to be understood LITERALLY: and then, as they were declarative of one of the greatest mysteries in Religion, there was a necessity to record the *very terms* employed, whenever the history of the institution was related."

To this we reply, that indeed, were the words used FIGURATIVELY, and the *figure* only expressive of a *death commemorated*, as the learned Author of the PLAIN ACCOUNT supposes, it is reasonable to think, the terms would have been varied in one or other of the sacred Writers: Because, in such a case, it is natural to believe, that Writers of so different genius and acquirements would not all have the same sentiment concerning the use of these precise *terms*; so as to esteem them

them preferable to any other: as, in fact, on this supposition, they would not be. But we can by no means allow the consequence, That therefore they are to be understood LITERALLY: since, if we admit the Institution to be of the nature of *a feast upon sacrifice*, as we have proved it is, there will be the same necessity for the unvaried use of the terms, although they are *figurative*, as there would be, although they were *literal*. For these precise terms are as necessary to denote *a feast upon sacrifice*, the Rite we contend for, as to denote a *Sacrifice*, the enormous idea of the Church of Rome.

Here too let me observe, both against our Catholic and Protestant Writer, that on this idea, of *a feast upon Sacrifice* (which no one, I think, can doubt but the primitive Christians had of the Lord's Supper) it would naturally follow, that Antiquity should always speak of this Rite in the strongest terms of veneration; as that, through which, the highest benefits of our Religion are conveyed. And this they might do, without much EXAGGERATION on the one hand; or any conception of a REAL PRESENCE on the other.

The learned Catholic Bishop saith true, that Protestants have but lamely justified the FIGURE of, *This is my body*, &c. by those other of, *I am the vine—I am the door*. And his reason is solid. *Jesus*, saith he, *in the institution of this Rite, was neither propounding a Parable, nor explaining an Allegory*. But when he would have us infer from hence, that there could be no other occasion for

such a figure, he imposes his usual art upon us. He would not speak out. He knew there were other occasions; such as *The declaring the* NATURE *of a Rite*; which was the case in question. But he would cut off our way to this, by supposing it to be allowed on all hands, That *the words are detached and separate from all other discourse—that there is no leading Preparation.* Now this, we have shewn to be an absolute falsehood: The *leading preparation* was a plain one: It was the PASCHAL SUPPER. The *preceding discourse* was an affecting one: It was the mention of his approaching DEATH AND SUFFERINGS. Therefore, the words of the Institution do not, as M. Bossuet pretends, *carry their whole meaning within themselves*; but refer to things preceding and exterior. He trifles with us, when he challenges us to find a place in Scripture *where the* sign *hath the name of the* thing signified, *given to it at the moment of the institution of the Rite, and* WITHOUT ANY LEADING PREPARATION. We have shewn there was a *leading Preparation.* And that circumstance proved, the Bishop, I suppose, would retract his challenge.

In the mean time, his triumphant conclusion loses much of its Lustre.—" That, in a word (says he) " which I pretend to evince, is, the embarras into " which the words, *This is my body*, throws all the " Protestant party. For either we must confound " all the Mysteries of Religion, or else give a reason " why Jesus hath not used these *forcible terms* " in any of his Institutions but that of the *last* " *Supper.* If his *body and blood* are equally pre-

" sent, and as really received by the Faithful else-
" where, in the celebration of every other act of faith,
" there was no reason for chusing these STRONG
" TERMS for the institution of the *Eucharist*, rather
" than for *Baptism*; and eternal Wisdom would,
" in this case, have expressed itself at random.
" This point I foretell shall be the eternal and in-
" evitable confusion of the Defenders of the *figu-*
" *rative sense**."

We see, this mighty difficulty, which is eternally to embarrass the Defenders of the figurative sense, is confessed to be at an end, on the discovery of one good reason, Why such *forcible terms* are employed in the institution of the *last Supper*, and not in *Baptism*, or in the other rites of our Religion. To send it agoing therefore, we need but observe, That the last Supper, as a *feast upon sacrifice*, referred to the *Sacrifice on the Cross*, in which, the *body and blood* of Christ were offered for our redemption. Now, to design and indicate *such* a feast by the *words* of the institution, *the forcible terms* in question were naturally, properly, nay *necessarily*, employed. And the reasoning which evinces this,

* Car ou il faut embrouiller tous les Mysteres, ou il faut pouvoir rendre une raison pourquoi Jesus Christ n'a parlé avec cette force que dans la cene. Si son corps et son sang sont aussi préseus et aussi reellement reçus par tout ailleurs, il n'y avoit aueune raison de choisir ces FORTES PAROLES pour *l'Eucharistie* plutot que pour le *Batéme*, et la sagesse eternelle auroit parlé en l'air. Cet endroit sera l'éternelle et inevitable confusion des Defenseurs du sens figuré. Histoire des Var. Tom. i. p. 477, 478.

evinces

evinces likewise that they were used in a *figurative sense*. On the contrary, the initiatory Rite of *Baptism* referred to another Baptism already in use; in both of which the matter administered being *water*, an element at hand, it was rightly called, in the institution of the Christian Baptism, by its proper name. But *flesh and blood* being the things administered in the ancient *feasts upon Sacrifice*, and they not being at hand at the institution of the last Supper, the elements substituted in their place were, in an elegant conversion, called by the *improper*, and very *necessary* names of *body and blood*.

To illustrate this matter a little further.—It may be proper to observe, that another Rite, the Rite of *imposition of hands*, for procuring the descent of the Holy Spirit, is called the BAPTISM OF FIRE: in which, both the terms are *figurative*; as, in the *Baptism of Water*, both are *literal*. And why this difference? Because the Agent or instrument, employed in the latter case, being *spiritual*, there was need of figurative names, taken from material things, to aid the grossness of our conception concerning his manner of operation: But *material* things, at hand, as in the former case, needed no such conversion of terms. So that all the mystery in this affair, I mean so far forth as concerns the *terms* by which a religious Rite is instituted, is only this, That when the things are of a spiritual nature, as the gifts of the Spirit; or of a material nature, not yet in *esse* (as the flesh of a sacrifice not yet offered, and therefore needing another body to be substituted in its place) There a necessity of employing *figu-*

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rative terms becomes apparent. But when the thing is a material substance, at hand, and actually employed, as water in Baptism, it would rather confound than aid our conceptions, to use improper, that is, figurative terms.

Thus we see, how, by interpreting Scripture on the common rules employed in the study of other ancient Writings, that is to say, having a special regard to the manners, customs, and opinions of those Times, the true nature and genius of the last Supper is discovered; and the sacred institution freed from the injuries to which these two extremes have long rendered it obnoxious.

But now I suppose the followers of both Systems will be ready to object, what the unbeliever will not be backward to applaud; "That it seems hard to imagine, that one of the most essential Rites of an universal Religion, designed for all times and places, should stand in need of the customs and opinions of a particular age and country to explain its nature and genius. For the consequence of this would seem to be, the rendering its nature precarious, and in course of time, obscure and unintelligible."

To which we reply, That many good ends may be discovered in this ordinance; and, therefore, many more may be reasonably supposed, which we cannot discover.

1. A Religion, however universal, when promulged in the manner, and propagated by the instruments, which God thought fit to employ when he gave us the Religion of his Son, must needs have many

many dependencies on the Times which saw its rise and progress.

2. As the *Christian* Religion rose upon the foundation of the Jewish, and became the final completion of God's religious dispensations to Mankind, it was very natural for several of its parts to bear a reference to that on which it was erected; it was very commodious that it should do so, both to perpetuate its *relation*, and to manifest its *completion*. So that, on this account, such a Religion, however universal, could not stand alone, or be independent of every thing exterior.

3. This reference to the customs and opinions of the times, was further useful, by impressing on the Religion so circumstanced, one INDELIBLE MARK of Truth, for the use of all ages. Had that Religion, pretending to have arisen in a remote age, brought down with it no tincture of the times, which saw its birth and increase, we might have reason to suspect or disbelieve the traditional accounts which informed us of its high antiquity.

But when we find upon it so strong a mark of ancientry; and impressed in a manner so *natural* as to cause no suspicion; and in a manner so *sure* as to afford no handle for Imposture; we may be confident, that it is of the times it pretends to be. Each Age hath its character of manners, just as it hath its character of style and writing; and as the Critics pronounce on the date of a manuscript from the turn of the phrase, and the formation of the letters, so Divines settle the æra of a Religion by the relation it bears to contemporary customs and practices,

practices. But were the MANUSCRIPT composed in an *universal Character*, and did the RELIGION contain *only the bare principles* of natural Law, delivered in the abstract, they would both want one necessary mark to ascertain their respective ages.

4. Again, this *restrained peculiarity* objected to, on the point in question, serves a still further, and greater end. It is contrived to be declarative of the TRUE NATURE of the death and sufferings of Christ.—That his death on the Cross was a SACRIFICE for the sins of the world, had been always held part of the Catholic Faith; founded on the express declarations of Scripture. But those Sects, who oppose the doctrine of a real REDEMPTION, have always striven to evade the notion of a real *sacrifice*; as that on which the doctrine of *Redemption* is founded; upon pretence, that the scripture expressions of Christ's *sacrifice* were only figurative and allusory. Now if the *last Supper*, the rite which commemorates the death of Christ, be of the nature of the *feasts upon sacrifice*, it is self-evident that the death itself was a REAL *Sacrifice*, and not merely called so by conversion of terms, or accommodation of ideas.

5. As it was contrived to declare the real nature of Christ's death, so it likewise served this further purpose, a purpose of great importance, to declare the ABOLITION OF SACRIFICES IN REVEALED RELIGION. For if in the most solemn act of Worship, where a *Sacrifice* always took place, a *commemoration only of a Sacrifice* is celebrated, it is plain, all sacrificial rites are excluded from that Religion: And

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(if that Religion be the completion of God's religious dispensations) consequently, *abolished*. The Sacrifice on the Cross does, indeed, in its nature, abolish all those Jewish Sacrifices, which evidently prefigured it; but to be assured of the abolition of sacrifice in general, some more express declaration, like what we find in this significant Rite, seemed to be expedient.

6. But lastly, The very notion of an UNIVERSAL RELIGION, unrelated to, and unconnected with, the times in which it was first divulged, is, in truth, repugnant to common sense and the nature of things. This Religion, as the Objectors tell us, is designed for all times and places. Some good method therefore of conveying it to posterity, and of perpetuating the conveyance, must be thought of and employed. There are but two ways of doing it, by one or other of these means of human communication, ORAL TRADITION or WRITING. *Tradition* hath been ever found insufficient for the purposes of Truth and Religion; and incapable of securing either their purity or existence. The only method which remains, is by *Scripture:* and this being to be composed in the living language of the age in which the Revelation was given, some parts of it must, in course of time, grow obscure: as depending on the circumstances of the users, whose customs and manners give the shape and colouring to all their discourse. So that, to understand the exact sense of the terms, and the full energy of the phrase, the customs and manners of the times, which fashioned the words and ornamented the

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idiom of the language, must of necessity be diligently studied, if we would arrive at any competent skill in the interpretation of such writings. Now this circumstance, which produced the objection, resulting from the very nature of things, we see how little force it hath against the truth of an *universal Religion*.

The conclusion from the whole is this, That we should, with all submission, take God's Laws, as he, in his wisdom, hath been pleased to give them; and as the order and condition of things, by him established, permits us to receive them.

Having now so largely inquired into the SPECIFIC NATURE of this holy Rite; we are enabled, in very few words, to shew (which we proposed, as the principal end of the Enquiry) what those benefits are which we receive at the *Lord's Table*; and what the obligations are, which we lie under, of frequenting it.

Christ, by the SACRIFICE of himself upon the cross, purchased the *Redemption* of Mankind: And this Rite being by its nature commemorative thereof, as it is *a feast upon Sacrifice*; each partaker receives, of consequence, the seal of pardon, and consequently, of restoration to his lost Inheritance.

But as this operates only on the terms of *repentance, and newness of life*, the gift would be defeated, by being bestowed on a condition which our perverse Nature so much opposes, was not this Nature softened and subdued by the power of GRACE;

GRACE; that promised blessing, peculiar to the Gospel-Dispensation. Now as the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT constitutes the most intimate COMMUNION OF GOD WITH MAN, What *time* can we conceive so highly sanctified for the reception of it, as that in which we renew our federal union with our Lord and Master, in his last Supper; called by St. Paul, the *communion of his body and blood.*

This leads us to what only remains to be considered, THE OBLIGATION TO FREQUENT COMMUNION: and this obligation will be best understood, by considering the reasons of an Institution which procures us so high a prerogative as *an union with the God of our Salvation.*

We are, by the Sacrament of BAPTISM, united, as members to the MYSTICAL *Body of Christ*, his CHURCH. And since Churchmembership is not only an outward but a public, rather than a private thing, One single administration of such Rite is sufficient to make that union lasting.

But, by the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, we are united, as members, to the SPIRITUAL *Body of Christ*, his GRACE. This is an inward union, and a particular: and lasts no longer than the right disposition of heart and affections shall continue: and this, by reason of our corrupt nature, and perpetual commerce with an evil world, being always impairing, it has always occasion to be strengthened and renewed. This, as we said, is the office of the *Holy Spirit*; whose gracious influence more peculiarly sanctifies that holy season. Hence the use and necessity of FREQUENT COMMUNION;—

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intimated in the words of the institution, *Do this in remembrance* of *me:* Which imply, as we have shewn, more than *preserving the memory of a dead benefactor;* they imply, the *continuing to receive his benefaction;* which is conveyed to us, from time to time, and *as often as we shew forth the Lord's death till he come.* So true is the account given of this sacred Rite in the ARTICLES of our Church, That *it is not only the badge or* TOKEN *of a Christian man's profession, but rather a certain and sure witness and effectual sign of Grace, and God's good-will towards us;* by which he doth *work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also* STRENGTHEN *and confirm our faith in him* *.

All this duly considered, we shall, I hope, be enabled to regain a proper veneration for this *holy Mystery;* which hath of late been so fatally impaired, as by other liberties, so principally by the prostitution of it to CIVIL PURPOSES; Not a prostitution by the LEGISLATURE; but by those licentious men, who, contenting themselves with the observance of the form and *letter,* neglect the end and *spirit of the* LAW.

* Art. XXV.

DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

STUDY

OF

THEOLOGY.

☞ An account of the following short Treatise will be found in Bishop HURD's *Life of the Author*, Vol. i. pp. 108—110, of this Edition; where he speaks of Bishop WARBURTON in his character of a Divine.

DIRECTIONS

FOR THE

STUDY OF THEOLOGY.

PART THE FIRST.

THE Husbandman, before he commits the good seed to the ground, tills it with repeated labour. The mind, as the soil, over-run with idle trash, where the vilest weeds of literature are mistaken for its flowers and fruit, requires the same kind of culture: it is to be well cleared before you can, with any reasonable hopes, intrust the great and useful Truths of Religion to the rankness of its bosom.

SECT. I.

To give it this preparation, therefore, I would first of all recommend to the young student the daily and long continued use of

Locke on Human Understanding,

and

The Institutions of Quintilian.

The one will teach him to think justly; and the other, to express his thoughts with correctness and elegance; without which qualities, Science is but

learned lumber, a burthen to the owner, and a nuisance to every body else. These two writers, possessing in a sovereign degree these excellent talents which they undertake to impart, are, of all others, best able, both by precept and example, to accomplish what they undertake; which is no other than to make *science* subservient to Truth, in the discovery and communication of it to others; the peculiar office of a Minister of the Gospel.

SECT. II.

Natural Law and *Natural Religion* are the foundation of, and therefore the necessary introduction to, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

For a general view of *Natural Law*, I should prefer *Grotius*'s book, *De jure belli & pacis*, to all the numerous writers on the same subject; though some of them be more scientific and philosophical; for He, perpetually illustrating his precepts by examples, not only teaches, what men should be, but what they are: without which full knowledge, our contemplations on *moral entities* are apt to grow too refined and visionary.

For a general view of *Natural Religion*, as distinguished, though it cannot be separated, from *Natural Law*, the most useful, I think, is *Wollaston*'s Treatise of *The Religion of Nature delineated*; for although he has placed moral obligation on very fanciful grounds, yet the solidity of those duties, which he hath shewn, in so just and elegant a manner, to arise out of *natural Religion*, is not at all diminished by that airy speculation.

But

But as the great Pillar of *Natural Law* is *Moral obligation*; and of *Natural Religion*, the *Being and Attributes of God*, there are two capital Books I would here recommend to our Student, to complete his ideas of this Law and Religion; which are, *Cumberland* on the *Law of Nature*, and *Cudworth's Intellectual System*. These, on some other accounts, might be commodiously placed elsewhere; yet on the whole they may, perhaps, be read with most profit, after the two books of *Grotius* and *Wollaston*.

Those incomparable works of *Cumberland* and *Cudworth* were, it is true, written in confutation of *Hobbes*'s Philosophy; which then threatened, like a later and ruder attempt, to overthrow all the received *Morality* and *Metaphysics* of the ancient and modern world. But their method of *polemic writing* (for such, indeed, it was) deserves commendation, as best answering their general end; while they overlooked the personal singularities of their adversary, and turned themselves to the abstract questions.—In *Cumberland*, Hobbes met with a very superior Reasoner; and in *Cudworth*, a far more accomplished Scholar. Both of them, indeed, inferior to that *Pest* of Science, sacred and profane, in elegance of composition and in purity and splendour of language. On which account, I should advise, that *Cumberland* be read, not in his own ungracious Latin, but in Barbeyrac's excellent translation into French.—For the same, and for a further reason, I should prefer Mosheim's Latin translation of the *Intellectual System*, to the English original;

that is to say, not only for its purity and elegance, but for its great abundance and excellence of learned notes.

Cumberland excels all men in fixing the true grounds of *moral obligation*; out of which, *Natural Law* and *Natural Religion*, both arise.

Cudworth takes a larger and sublimer range: he begins with *Metaphysics*, which employs what we now have of the famous work of the *Intellectual System*.

In exhausting the Metaphysic questions concerning the *Being and Nature of the Deity*, he hath occasionally given us a complete History of Ancient Learning as far as relates to those Inquiries: which, besides the particular use in the order of the *course*, will be of this further advantage to our student, the throwing great lights on what he finds delivered concerning *one God and one Lord* in the Old and New Testament, when he now comes, after these preparations, to the direct study of the *Sacred Writings*; the proper end of his labours, the gaining a *true Knowledge of Revealed Religion*.

SECT. III.

Now, though the *Mosaic Religion*, to which we come, be no where to be learnt, but in the *Old Testament*; nor the *Christian*, but in the *New*; yet it may be convenient for us to know, what ideas those learned men, who are believed to have most successfully studied the *Sacred Books*, have entertained of both: not with a purpose to acquiesce in their labours, but to facilitate our own; not for our guides,

guides, whom we are implicitly to follow in a road as yet to ourselves unknown; but for our *Counsellors* or *Assistants*, who are ready to lay before us what they conceive of the *Carte du pays* in general; which our student may use or correct for his own advantage, as he goes along.

There are not many who have applied themselves, in good earnest, to assist us in our knowledge of the *Mosaic Law*; and most of these, very unsuccessfully. From the Jewish Doctors, we derive much less instruction than might have been expected. Yet, to one of these it must be confessed, we owe what we have of what is most considerable on this subject; I mean a *Rationale* of the Jewish *Ritual*; which essential part of the Mosaic Law had been long the stumbling-block of Infidelity; and was likely to continue so; when, in the first flourishing times of the *Saracene* Empire, a great number of Jews (as we learn from *William of Paris*, in his book *de Legibus*) devoting themselves to the study of the Aristotelian Philosophy (then cultivated by these followers of Mahomet with a kind of Scientific rage), and thereby contracting an inquisitive and disputatious habit, set themselves on examining into *the Reasons of the Jewish Laws*; which being unable to discover, they, with their usual levity, concluded, that they were futile, absurd, and of human original; and so apostatised, in great numbers, from the religion of their Fathers, to Mahometanism.

To put a stop to this evil, the famous *Maimonides* wrote, with much success, the book called *Ductor*

Ductor Dubitantium; the chief purpose of which is to explain *the causes of the Jewish Ritual.*

On this ground, our excellent Countryman, *Spencer*, long afterwards, when the Rabbi's book had been almost forgotten, erected his admirable book intitled, *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus.* This, though confined to an illustration of the *Ritual Law*, is, by far, the most considerable attempt yet made to explain the nature and genius of the *Mosaic Religion:* while the other capital parts of this Dispensation, such as the nature of its civil Government, a *Theocracy*;—the rewards and punishments, peculiar to it;—its extraordinary administration by appointed Agents, endowed with supernatural powers, and with the gifts of *Miracles* and *Prophecy*;—the *double sense* in which the latter was necessarily involved; and the language consequent to its nature and use: these things, I say, of such importance to the successful study of the Old Testament, have been hitherto treated, not only superficially, but absurdly. Yet notwithstanding, as the *Ritual Law* constitutes so considerable a part of the *Mosaic Dispensation*, Spencer's book is of infinite use, not only for its own appropriated excellence, but for the subjects necessarily leading him to a very detailed account of the religious state of the ancient Pagan world, without which knowledge we can have but a very imperfect idea of the *Jewish Law and History.* The scarcity of good Writers on the Old Testament shews how necessary it is to make the best of the incomparable Author of the book

De

De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus. After this, the Student having furnished himself with *Walton's Polyglott Bible*, and the large Collection called *Critici Sacri*, may proceed directly to his great Work, the Study of the BIBLE.

SECT. IV.

IF it be hard to *find* good Writers on the *Old Law*, it is as hard to *choose* out of the great Number on the *New*.

In our study of the Gospel, our wants are not so great, and our assistances much greater. Though it be the purpose of these slight hints to recommend the BIBLE as the genuine *mine*, inexhausted and inexhaustible, from whence all our Treasures of Theology are to be fetched, and which consequently is to be principally explored, while we turn our backs on all the *Sums* and *Systems* of Artificial Divines; yet a general acquaintance with the two Dispensations, procured as we can, may, in the entrance on our Work, somewhat ease our Labour.

After what has been said of a manuduction to the Study of the *Old Testament*, I would only recommend, from amongst the crude abundance on the *New*, two short tracts, *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*; and Dr. Burnet of the Charter-house, his *De Fide et Officiis Christianorum*; the first of these tracts being a kind of prelude or introduction to the other. They are both of them excellent in their different kinds. So that when our Student has done this, nothing remains but that he may enter directly on the

the study of the *New Testament*, which he will now find prepared to receive him as a well-qualified Guest. And *Grotius*'s Critical Comment on the *Gospels*, and *Locke* on the *Epistles*, accompanying this Study, will open all the treasures of our Faith to one so happily employed. What, after the use of these two Commentators, will be wanting for further illustration, must be sought for in the Collection called the *Sacred Critics*, before recommended, amongst the Critics on the *New Testament*.

Only, in the study of *The Revelation of St. John*, from whence may be deduced the most illustrious and irrefragable Evidence of the Divinity of our holy Religion, the works of Mr. Joseph Mede, whose Comments on the *Apocalypse* is, indeed, in Theology, what *Harvey*'s discovery of the circulation of the blood was thought to be in Physics, should be carefully digested.

This labour, on the New Testament, well over, our Student may then, but not before, read with advantage some of the many Bodies, or *Institutes*, as they are called, of Christian Theology. The best I know of is, for its elegance, clearness, and freedom from partial affections of all sorts, that of the great *Episcopius*, though unfinished; the parts wanting may be well supplied from *Limborch's Theologia Christiana*; a master-piece, which, in its kind, may be well compared to a work of Raphael's finished by Julio Romano.

SECT. V.

HAVING proceeded thus far in our *Course*, and gone through that part of *Theology* called the *positive* or *dogmatic*, our Student's next step will be to provide a guard or defence for the security of his acquirements; which is to be done by the assistance of the other part, called the *Polemic*; which of late indeed ignorance has brought into discredit, from the general decay of critical and dialectic Learning.

1. He will begin with a defence of *Revelation in general*, as it lies in *Grotius de Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, enlarged by *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*; which may be considered as a kind of Commentary on the other's text: the just encomiums of which have so long satiated the public ear, that we now hear of that with indifference in which our Fathers so much triumphed. But the book I mean is that written by Mr. Stillingfleet; not that unfinished work which bears the same title, written when he became Bishop of Worcester.

2. From thence, he will go on to a defence of the *Christian Religion* against *Judaism*. For which he will need no other instruction than what he may find in *Limborch*'s work, intitled, *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ Amica Collatio cum Erudito Judæo*. This was Isaac Orobio, a Spanish Jew, who, escaping from the prisons of the Inquisition, now practised Physic in Holland. In this Disputation will be found all that the stretch of human parts on the one hand, or Science on the other, can produce, to varnish error, or to unravel sophistry.

try. All the Papers of Orobio in defence of Judaism, as opposed to Christianity, are here given at large, with Limborch's answers, section by section: where the subtilest sophisms of a very superior genius will be found ably and satisfactorily detected and exposed by the strong, profound, and clear reasoning of this celebrated Remonstrant.

3. The defence of the *Reformed* Churches against *Popery* is next in order, and our Student will find it completely performed in that master-piece of human reasoning, Chillingworth's book against Knott, intitled, *The Religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation*; in which he will see all the school jargon of that subtile Jesuit incomparably exposed; and the long dispute between the two churches, for the first time, placed upon its proper immovable ground, the BIBLE alone, after the extravagant Authority of the *Fathers*, perpetually appealed to by both Churches, had long usurped the prerogatives of Scripture; and, by breaking down the boundaries betwixt right and wrong, had made the Controversy endless.

And having here recommended to our Student's most careful attention these two capital works of *Limborch* against the *Jew*, and *Chillingworth* against the *Jesuit*, it presents a fit occasion to take notice of that ignorant censure of *Polemic Divinity* now so fashionable even amongst those whose Profession might have enabled them to know better, as if it were the offspring of the Philosophy and Divinity of the SCHOOLS; when they might see that the futility of Scholastic Learning was never more effectually

effectually held up to derision, in the persons of those two subtile Disputants (who were overrun with it) than by these incomparable Defenders of Christianity and Protestantism.

4. From the Defence of *Protestantism* in general, we come next to that of the *Church of England*, against the *Sectaries*. And here it will suffice, *instar omnium*, to study *Hooker's four first Books of Ecclesiastical Polity*; in which, an *established* Church is immovably fixed on this great *Principle*, That the *outward Polity of a Church*, though divinely instituted, is in the class, and of the species of those Laws, which even the sacred Authority, that enjoins them, does not render immutable. A work bearing all the marks of immortality, as destined to excite the admiration of men while good letters remain amongst them.

SECT. VI.

But Polemic Divinity, though of the best sort, being apt to give a rigid turn to the sentiments of those long engaged in it, we may, by this time, find it necessary to remind our Student, that though the *means* be Learning, yet the *end of the commandment is Charity*, and that the truest badge of our being the Servants of one Common Master is our mutual forbearance of one another. Now this Charity is violated by *restraint* and *intolerance:* whether exercised by a Church to its own Members; or towards those who have renounced its jurisdiction.

1. The

1. The injustice of the first kind, is combated and exposed in a very masterly manner by Bishop Taylor in his *Liberty of Prophesying*, and by Bishop *Stillingfleet* in his *Irenicum*. *Taylor* wrote when the Church of England was groaning under the tyranny of the Puritans or Presbyterians; and, therefore, to remind them of their own claims, under the like oppressive Circumstances, he intitles his Apology the *Liberty of Prophesying*, under which name they chose to ennoble their *Lectures*. *Stillingfleet* wrote when the established Church was on the recovery of its legal rights; and, finding it sharpened by long injuries and indignities, he endeavoured to allay the heats of his Brethren, by his *Irenicum*; both these writers pleading for religious Liberty; the one when it was violated by oppression; the other when it was in danger from fresh resentments. Yet it is not to be denied or disguised that these celebrated Writers, either not yet comprehending the doctrine of *Toleration in its full extent*, or perhaps not finding the minds of men sufficiently enlarged to receive it (which, though a truth, from its coincidence with the genius of Christianity, one would have expected to find amongst the first received in an Established Church, was unhappily amongst the last); they cramped the doctrine within too narrow bounds, while, to avoid scandal, they thought it of use to distinguish in laboured in discourses between points fundamental and not fundamental; which, though impertinent to the true decision of the question of Toleration, yet accidentally

dentally let in much light into the true nature of Christianity.

2. The injustice of the second kind, the oppressive treatment of Dissenters or Sectaries, gave occasion for the question of *Toleration* to be more fully and completely handled by Mr. Locke in his celebrated *Letters* on that subject; and by Mr. Bayle in his no less celebrated *Comment*, on the words, *compel them to enter in*. These four Works should be very carefully studied. They give a complete view of the Subject. Such, who have wrote since in support of the Divine Principle of *Toleration*, may be said, only, *actum agere*.

The enemies of pure Religion have *defiled* Revelation, each on his own peculiar principles: but friends and enemies have concurred in *dishonouring* it, by one common principle, held occasionally by all in their turns—*the Antichristian Doctrine of Persecution and Intolerance*. Now, the Books here recommended expose it in all its iniquity and folly.

SECT. VII.

From the *interior Spirit* of our holy Religion, which is constant and unchangeable, we come to the *outward face* of it, whose features have, both by time and climate, been ever on the change; nor has time, from the infancy to the old age of the Church, brought on greater disparities in its looks than the intemperature of Climates, which have been the scenes of Ecclesiastical occurrences. The ill-sorted Pictures with which Church-history is adorned, serve

at once for the opprobrium and the glory of Religion.

Order requires that the Student should first take a view of the *general History of the Church*; and *convenience* points to us, that he should begin with some well-chosen abridgment. There is only one that deserves our commendation; but that one is indeed incomparable: It is written by the very learned Mosheim, in elegant Latin. Amongst the various excellencies of his method, I shall only mention this, his referring, on every subject, to the best writers who have treated it at large: so that whenever information excites the Student to look into the Authors referred to by Mosheim, he is sure to find the solution of his doubts, or satisfaction to his curiosity.

From the *History of the Church in general*, the nature of the course directs our Student to the *General History of the Church of England.*

But our repeated complaints of the defective state of this part of Literature amongst us, extends to the *ecclesiastical* as well as to the *civil* History of Great Britain. There are only two writers of the general History of our Church who deserve the name of Historians, Collier the Nonjuror, and Fuller the Jester.

The first hath written with sufficient dignity, elegance, and spirit; but hath dishonoured and debased his whole work with the absurd and slavish Tenets of the High Churchmen.

The other is composed with better temper, and on better principles; and with sufficient care and attention;

attention; but worked on a slight fantastic ground, and in a style of buffoon pleasantry altogether unsuitable to so grave and important a subject. Yet much may be learnt from both; much, indeed, to avoid, as well as to approve.

After this general view of Church History, the *Reformation* of Religion from the corruptions of Popery, the most important period of Church History, will deserve our particular attention.

The rise and progress of it may be best learnt from *Sleidan*, in his *De Statu Religionis & Reipublicæ Carolo V. Cæsare Commentarii;* more valuable for its veracity than for the charms of its composition.

To have a proper knowledge of that of our own Church, Burnet's much-applauded History of the Reformation of the Church of England, with his third volume of Explanations and Corrections, must be carefully read. Were we to estimate its value by the reception it met with from the two Houses of Parliament, when a whole People were frightened out of their wits by the imminent danger of Popery, we should rate it much too high. It is a sensible well-attested narrative of Facts, collected with Care, and digested with Candour.

SECT. VIII.

AND now we are arrived at the concluding labours of our young Divine, the imparting of that knowledge to others, which with so much care and study he hath procured for himself. Amongst the many marks which distinguish the *Christian Philo-*

sopher from the *Pagan*, this is one of the most striking—the *Pagan* sought knowledge in a selfish way, to secrete it for his own use: the *Christian* seeks it with the generous purpose (first in view, though last in execution) to impart it to others. The *Pagan Philosopher*, therefore, having cultivated the *art of thinking*, proceeds to that of *speaking*, in order to display his vanity in the dexterous use of deceit. On the other hand, the *Christian Philosopher* cultivates the *art of speaking*, for the sole purpose of disseminating the Truth, in his office of Preacher of the Gospel. That *species of eloquence*, therefore, which is only fitted for his use, is best described by an eminent Writer, who indeed makes it the *genus of the Art*: "True eloquence," says he, "I find to be none but the serious and hearty "LOVE OF TRUTH: and that whose mind soever is "fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good "things, and with the DEAREST CHARITY to infuse "the knowledge of them to others, when such a man "would speak, his words, like so many nimble "and airy servitors, trip about him at command, "and in well-ordered files, as he could wish, fall "aptly into their own places *."

This is the true *Christain eloquence*; to which I would have our Student eagerly aspire; whatever route his talents lead him to take, in discharge of this part of his Ministry: whether his Discourse be employed in illustrating the sacred text—or in explaining and enforcing the capital duties of Morality —or lastly, in pressing, upon the conscience, the

* Milton.

practical

practical obligations both of natural and revealed Religion, by a pathetic address to the Passions and Affections of his hearers: For under one or other of these three heads, I suppose, may be comprised all the rational service of the Pulpit.

1. If his disposition incline him to the illustration of the sacred Text, which, in strict truth, is performing what by his office he has engaged himself to undertake, that is to say, *to preach the word of God*, the best model I can think of are the Sermons of Dr Samuel Clarke, of St. James's, who is always plain, clear, accurate, and full.

2. If he rather chooses to expatiate on the great Duties of Morality, Dr. Barrow should be his principal Guide: whose comprehensive mind penetrates into the very darkest recesses of our nature, at the same time that the radiations of his genius gild the most solemn and gloomy prospects. In a word, his is that *true Eloquence* which Milton so happily describes, and which this Preacher so eminently possesses.

But yet we should not suspect, that Clarke is defective in what Barrow so eminently abounds; or that Barrow, on fit occasions, neglects to cultivate that sacred soil from which Clarke reaped such abundant harvests.

3. A pathetic address to the passions and affections of penitent hearers, perhaps the most operative of all these various species of instruction, is that in which the English Pulpit, notwithstanding all its

its other superior advantages, is most defective. Here, the *persuasive* is apt to be barren of reasoning; and the *pathetic* to degenerate into *cant*. A perfect model of this kind we must seek for abroad. Nor need we be long to seek, though we be forced to take up with a Papist, and, what is worse, a Jesuit—the celebrated Bourdaloue, who, to the most perfect sublime and pathetic, has occasionally added all the force of reason in the simplest and most beautiful method, in which will be found many excellent strokes of *scriptural criticism* and *moral divinity*, which so much ennoble the works of the two English Preachers above recommended for the execution of their several methods. Nor will there be any danger that our Student, now so well armed at all points, by the truths collected in his Course, should be betrayed or entangled in the errors and corruptions, which have so miserably deformed the mother-church of this famous Preacher.

In conclusion, I confide in the young Divine, who resolves in good earnest to go through the course here recommended, that he will consider it as only the foundation of the learning of his profession; as only the outlines on which he is to work through life, in order to deserve the Character (at which we will suppose he aims) of an *accomplished Divine*.

On this account, I have been exceeding sparing, in this *first part*, to recommend such Writers as are to aid him in his *Course*; omitting all but those of capital

capital note, who, as he goes along, are of necessity to be well digested.

The SECOND PART * therefore will be employed in an account, under each head, of those additional Writers, that may enable the Student to make himself a perfect Master of the several Subjects marked out in this; which though it may give him a just, yet, without further assistance, may remain a too general idea of his Business.

* The *Second Part* has not been found among the Bishop's papers, and probably was never written.

R. W.

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